his Book, with 397 others, l...
late Rev. T. STEEVENS, who w
28 years Pastor of the Baptist Chur
Colchester, to the Pastor and Dea
of the same, and their successors, for
the time being.—

T

# Faithfulness

OF

# GOD,

CONSIDERED and CLEARED

In the great EVENTS of His

# WORD

OR, A

## SECOND PART

OF THE

## *Fulfilling of the Scripture.*

Where its Convincing and near Approach before Mens eyes, with some clear Discovery thereof in the Work and Conduct of Providence this Day about the Church, is shewed forth.

*LONDON*,
Printed for *Thomas Parkhurst* at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapside* near *Mercers-Chappel*, 1674.

773-791

# The Preface.

IT seems a sad conjunction in this day of a strange security most are fallen into, when such unusual awakening presages of judgment are, a crying voice from the Lord, but yet a deaf ear; how the awe and dread of light, which used to appear on mens conscience though otherways haters thereof, is now so far gone, as if the present age had found a new way to escape the most clear discoveries of the truth, which was not formerly known; which too sadly presages some strange and astonishing strokes of judgment must speak that, which with greatest contempt hath been rejected from the Word: Oh that there might be an awaking to duty yet *before the decree bring forth*, *Zeph.* 2. 2. For though repentance can never be in vain, where it is in truth, yet it is clear, this may come too late to prevent a temporal stroke; and is there not cause to expect the Lord will take some strange way to plead for making himself known to be God, and enforce the certainty and truth of his Word, since men have got so far beyond the reach of an ordinary cure, that the unheard-of wickedness of this time is come to seek its patrociny from Atheism; and the alone relief most seem to have against the tormenting fears of fu-

ture things, and an eternal ſtate, is by weakening their aſſent to the truth; but they cannot weaken the truth, which ſtands unſhaken, and brings ſuch an aſſurance therewith to thoſe who know it, as can fully quiet and ſupport the Soul, though they were left alone to walk in this way. Yea, though the power and life of godlineſs lye deep and hid, and to the experienced Chriſtian alone is ſuch a demonſtration of the certainty of ſupernatural truths, and their verification to the Soul, that none elſe can know at a diſtance what they feel and aſſuredly enjoy; yet are the *indicia* ſo obvious, I mean ſuch clear, rational, and convincing evidences of the ſame, that how men poſſibly ſhould get theſe put by, and rejected in this age, is not eaſie to comprehend; but that a real irritation and torment upon their ſpirit, from ſuch clearneſs of evidence now accompanying the truth, is the great influencing cauſe of ſo prodigious an Atheiſm this day within the Church, beyond what hath been in times of greater darkneſs. For clearing this, and to bear ſome witneſs to the unſpotted *Faithfulneſs* of God, which as the Sun in its ſtrength keeps its courſe whatever clouds intervene, amidſt the darkneſs and confuſions of this time, is this following diſcourſe intended.

For the Subject, it is great, yea that whereon the whole ſuperſtructure of truth and godlineſs ſtands; ſo as it calls for ſome awful diſtance, in our neareſt converſe therewith; but ſuch where with an unſpeakable delight we may ſee its ancient ſtanding, the fulneſs of evidence it brings

brings therewith; theſe near and ſenſible approaches this hath to a Chriſtians Soul; that ſurpriſing brightneſs with which it is ſtill found to break up, when at the darkeſt, and as midnight with the Church; the certainty and fixedneſs of its courſe amidſt all the reelings of the earth; its ſuitableneſs to anſwer all can moſt diſquiet any of the Saints, and let them ſee how clear and ſtraight the way of the Lord is, amidſt the greateſt confuſions of the time, yea how viſibly his *Faithfulneſs* is commenſurate to the whole work of providence in the earth.

For the Intent and Deſign of this ſhort Treatiſe, the Reader can moſt fitly judg in his peruſal; but this, with ſome ſerious aim hath been propoſed, to appear in behalf of the glorious *Faithfulneſs* of God in his Word, by witneſſing thereto, in an age when this was never more directly impugned, and all poſſible artifice on foot to caſt reproach thereon; and for being a help to the Chriſtians joy, to ſhew what this day is under his reach, and near even at his hand, for attaining more clear and ſolid impreſſions of the truth, and certainty of the Scripture, than moſt ſeem to look after; ſince it is too obvious, what hefitation and dark apprehenſions moſt have about ſpiritual truths, in not knowing the great reality which is there, and how no ſcience can have ſuch firm and clear demonſtrations; in purſuance of this ſcope ſome few things peculiarly intended here, I ſhall premiſe:

1. To witneſs how great and marvelous things are in our ſight, and have a real being

before us; that none can deny to be an undoubted product of the Scripture, and there only could have been made known; in which a divine power eminently exerted, and above all poſſible reach of natural cauſes, may be as clearly ſeen, as in the moſt extraordinary miracles that ever the Church knew; and how confirming a ſeal that is greater than theſe to the truth is ſtill continued before us.

2. It is not to aſſert, or give ſome naked diſcovery of theſe great ſupernatural truths in the Word, but to lead into the *things* themſelves, in their real being and exiſtence that this is intended, as truths to which there is a more near approach by ſeeing, taſte, and as it were by ſome touch, than ſeems by moſt to be underſtood, how near and feeling a converſe is to be reached betwixt the intellect and the object; yea thus what great improvements might be made of ſenſe in its ſubſerviency to our faith, and a more full repoſe and quiet of the Soul for adventuring on the Word; ſo as the way of believing, which to many is ſo dark and ſtrange a thing, ſhould be in that manner comfortable and clear, with as quieting ſecurity as we could have in the way of ſenſe and feeling; the clearing of which in this following eſſay, in nothing will be found to juſtle with that great duty of walking by faith, and to believe againſt hope and viſible appearances of the event, but as a ſingular help thereto.

3. Its intent is to ſhew, how by no chance or poſſible caſualty, the truth of ſuch great events of the Word, and certainty of its verification in theſe can be called in queſtion; but as to the Church in the great providences of the time, ſo

to

to a Chriſtian in his private caſe, is it moſt demonſtrable, how every ſtep in experience, and in the way of ſenſe is by line and rule with as ſure and infallible a connexion betwixt this and the written Word, as there can be in nature betwixt the cauſe and the effect, the head-ſpring and the ſtream.

4. To clear alſo the way of the Lord, and certainty of his truth in this very dark hour, when his work about the reformed Church ſo remarkably appears to be a work of judgment; for conſidering of which, ſome aſtoniſhing providences of this time did give a ſerious riſe.

5. Here is ſome aim to hold forth clear and ſolid grounds from the Scripture, with reſpect to the ſad appearances now of future things, and too anxiouſly diſquieting preſages many have thereof; which (whilſt the earth ſeems to be at reſt, and as buried for the moſt part in a deep ſleep) are ready to faint and overwhelm the ſpirits of ſome; not conſidering what great aſſurances from the Lord are in the Word given, for a more comfortable proſpect of future events, than it ſeems we allow our ſelves, and how well it is ſuited to anſwer ſuch very ſadning queries; what will become of the Churches? of the Truth? of the poſterity? when the enemy is *ſowing tares*; the ſtorm groweth; a dead palſie we are fallen into, yea whilſt every man ſeems to be *with his hand on his loins, alas for that day is great, it is the time of Jacobs trouble, but he ſhall be delivered out of the ſame*, Jer. 30. 7.

6. I ſhall add no more, but that with ſome ſpecial tendency this following diſcourſe may

be ſeen to witneſs, how it is no graſping at a ſhadow to be a Chriſtian, and no ſuch realities as theſe they find, in a time when the profeſſed principles and work of ſome is to make void the very being and truth of ſerious practical Religion.

For what reflections I may be obnoxious to, in adventuring yet more on ſo great a ſubject, I ſhall ſay little; but if any fruit and ſolid advantage be found in its peruſal, I might then hope there ſhould need few words of apology; ſome eſſays at duty may have theſe diſcouragements and difficulties to wreſtle with, that if there be not a doing for the Lord, it were a ſad part to act. Theſe few things I have here confidence to premiſe, for which I ſtand at a higher bar than the judgment of men; 1. That in this following diſcourſe, I have ſought *truth*, and not to follow the chaſe of airy and naked notions, as having ſome preſſure on my own ſpirit, that theſe could not anſwer to! It is a great thing to believe the being of God, and that nothing fails of his Word; I muſt ſay, were theſe truly believed, it might be ſtrange a Chriſtians life were not more in a continued wonder, and with ſome greater tranſports of joy. 2. I have ground to ſay, That no fear from theſe times hath oft preſſed me with more anxiety, than of theſe ſad conſequences, ſuch ſhaking things as have of late occurred, with the abounding of offences, were like to have, by a too viſible tendency to turn many off all perſwaſion of the truth; which was one ſpecial incitement to ſome further proſecution of what I had begun on this ſubject; though I muſt confeſs

confeſs with ſuch wreſtlings on my own ſpirit, to trouble the world more by any ſuch appearance, that if ſomething from the Lord very immediately had not been to determine and clear, it was ſome ſervice he would not reject, I ſhould have needed no apology for ſuch a thing, but laid it aſide. I hope the Reader may not find cauſe to quarrel with an unneceſſary multiplying of words, or that his time is encroached upon that way, ſo far as the expreſſing the matter with ſome plainneſs could admit; nor from any coincidence of purpoſes, with what was held forth in the *firſt part*, though the ſubject and ſcope be much one; I confeſs, in handling of both, the frequent changes of my health, the untroddenneſs of this path, the weight and concernment of the truths, with ſome ſtudy (if I may ſay without miſtake) to believe what I wrote, and not eaſily to admit things, or take on truſt, without a clear and quieting perſwaſion thereof, was not without ſome peculiar difficulty, beyond what might have been in greater enlargements on another ſubject. This favour I crave from the Reader, in his peruſal either of this or the former part, to take a ſerious look of the whole, before he paſs his judgment on a part, things there being ſo connected together in their tendency to anſwer the ſcope.

No time did ever more preſſingly call for eſtabliſhment in the truth than this our lot is fallen in, and to be ſolidly founded on ſuch a ground, that can bear up though all other props ſhould be ſhaken. The faith and patience of the Saints hath had a ſore conflict, and the darkeſt part may

may be yet to go over; but 'tis well it cannot be ſuch as to out-go that light and comfort which is in the Scripture; *Unleſs thy law had been my delight, I had periſhed in my affliction, Pſal.* 119. 32. Were it known what it is to have theſe ſo near, how eaſie ſhould it be to reaſon with what ſeems moſt peculiarly to influence the heavineſs and trouble of many this day. 1. From the preſſure of affliction and multiplied temptations, which with ſome now may be ſo ſore, as the waters are ready to *enter into their ſoul*, and put them to queſtion their principles; but thus is the Lords way with his people known, when he brings them into ſtraits, to give them a greater light than before; as *Luther* after ſore wreſtlings ſaid, *ſtatim apparuit mihi nova facies Scripturæ*; the afflicted have their peculiar comforts, much beyond others; and know what is to bear up the heart, that it is ſtronger than it ſelf. 2. Such is the tribulation of theſe times as may ſeem more imbittering to ſome, from the different lot they ſee of others; how many *ſtretch themſelves on their Couches, that chant to the ſound of the Viol, and drink wine in bowls, but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joſeph, Amos* 6. 4, 5, 6. Few ſeem to know the heart of the afflicted, or are found to act the *Samaritans* part; and how rare are theſe *who ſearch out the cauſe of the poor, whom men regard not*; and oft have no witneſs to their griefs but one, but is indeed one for all, *Thou God ſeeſt me, Gen.* 16. 13. It is in the Bible the cauſe of the oppreſſed will find patrociny, when no-where elſe; nor can that aſſurance fail, *but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy,*

*Joh.*

*Joh.*16. 30. Every day hath this work, to put ſome part of the Chriſtians griefs, and the moſt deſirable enjoyments of others by, which can never poſſibly be reacted, nor return any more again, 3. Are not prejudices at holineſs now ſuch as might put Chriſtians more on their guard for a ſolid founding on the Scripture, yea when it is ſo clear truth ſuffers not at that rate, nor is the ſhaking of many, in ſuch hazard, from what viſible oppoſition is thereto, as by theſe more ſubtil conveyances of reproach; whilſt a ſerious care to prevent this, or to advance the repute and credit of that excellent profeſſion of holineſs, ſeems to have but little weight upon us. *Truth* this day is as a broken and ſhipwrackt intereſt in the eyes of many, offences have come in as a flood upon the Church, whence a ſpirit of Atheiſm hath in a ſtrange manner got up, and been upon the aſcendant, but a recovery muſt be of all that is loſt; when that *creating*-word from the Lord on the *dry bones* comes to bring them together, and put fleſh and ſinews thereon. There are *three* things ſeem this day to be a difficult part of a Chriſtians work; though duties which had never a more peculiar ſeaſon and call thereto, than now.

Firſt, *By a manifeſtation of the truth, to commend our ſelves to every mans conſcience, in the ſight of God*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. So as in the worſt of times holineſs may appear, which with the greateſt luſtre and moſt advantage doth then commend its truth and certainty to others; nor can the time be ſuch as this can want ſome dread and awe therewith, to

draw

draw forth a teſtimony from its greateſt haters, when to enforce it the more, the world may ſee how well a cloſe and fervent adherence to the truth, with a convincing prudence can evidently meet, ſo as to ſhew none are more men than ſuch who are moſt Chriſtians; yea how theſe upon higher inducements and principles than any outward intereſt, muſt be ſwayed in purſuance of their duty.

2. It may appear a very difficult ſervice this day to ſtand in the gap when a breach is made; or how to come in the room of an Interceſſor betwixt a highly provoked God, and a people in whoſe caſe ſo much cauſe is to dread the near approach of that ſentence, *Zach.* 11.9. The duty is undeniable, to purſue a national reconciliation as well as perſonal, though but one were found to adventure thereon, *to lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left*; and put ſo ſad a ruin under the great high Prieſts hand; yea ſuch doth the Lord look after, when judgment is ready to go forth; *And I ſought for a man that ſhould make up the hedg and ſtand in the gap before me, that I ſhould not deſtroy the land, but I found none*, *Ezek.* 22.30. This ſeems but little believed, how far he does ſubject even the Intereſts of a Nation to the prayers of his people; *Iſa.* 45. 1. yea what upon a *peradventure* hath been reached in the moſt hopeleſs eſſays, *Jon.* 3.9. but oh how ſad when theſe who are moſt concerned to keep a land from ſinking, it cannot bear.

3. It may be too obvious, how difficult a part of a Chriſtians work this is, to walk aright towards others in a diſtempered time, when a ſpirit of jea-

louſie

louſie ſeems to be poured out; ſo little oneneſs of heart oft found, where there wants not oneneſs of principles; and too viſible an abounding of theſe evils the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, as ſome part of the Churches ruin in that time, *envy, ſtrife, railings, and evil ſurmiſings*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 4. *Two* things may be inſtanced, which ſeem to give a peculiar riſe thereto: one is, little perſonal freedom both Chriſtians and Miniſters have amongſt themſelves, whilſt ſo ſad a liberty is oft taken to ſpeak at a diſtance to the prejudice of others; yea when it cannot be hid, how many ſuch things that have begot diſtance, jealouſie, and bitterneſs of ſpirit, upon more clear and convincing trial are oft found a grapling with their own ſhadow; thence gets Satan ſuch advantage, and the prayers of the Church are obſtructed more than is laid to heart. Some ſins ſeem not once to come near, diſtreſs our conſcience as a tranſgreſſion of the rule. I confeſs, one of the difficult works of a Chriſtian this is, that needs ſome eſpecial touch of the great Healers hand, on the ſpirits of his people, to make eaſie, how to walk with that tenderneſs, prudence, and yet freedom of ſpirit, in duties we owe to others. But a ſecond I muſt name, that gives too viſible a riſe to our ruin this day from our ſelves, more than from all our adverſaries, the want of an *humble* ſpirit, in ſo remarkably humbling a time; what rare excellencies hath this oft ſpoiled! and whether in a Nation or a man, it is that the holy God will contend with; I am ſure, if our ſad diſtempers were followed more to the true riſe, here it might be found. But I fear to have tranſgreſſed by ſo long a Preface.

# POSTSCRIPT.

Reader,

IT is like you may think ſtrange, how theſe Two ſheets in the cloſe fall in as an Appendix, or what congruity there is with the foregoing Subject: But as nothing is more clear, than how Atheiſm with Popery are combined, and meet in one deſign and intereſt, To make void the Truth and Certainty of the Scripture; and that to ſecure the very being of Chriſtianity, and our having a Bible given us from Heaven, and not from men to found our Faith on, is that where the moſt clear ſtating of the Queſtion, and great Controverſie betwixt the Romiſh and Reformed Church lies (as is touched a little in that laſt Section immediately preceeding the Appendix); You may find alſo what evident and neceſſary riſe was in clearing that amazing induration of the Romiſh Church held forth page 95. to give ſome view of their Doctrine and Principles, and in ſome few things pointed at there, I judged it more ſuiting, to ſet it down after this manner in the cloſe; and that this method, by ſome few Queſtions and Anſwers, might be moſt for their edification to whom it is eſpecially intended. For the ſhortneſs thereof, if any think ſtrange, they may alſo judg ſome difficulty was more thus than in a greater enlarging; but it was for thoſe who ſeem to improve little what may exceed ſuch a bulk for their inſtruction, I mean ſuch of younger years, and of the meaneſt capacity, with many

*many else, whose indisposition to read, want of time, in too visible a throng of diversions, seems to shut them out from what is writ in books; But I hope its shortness is such as yet ye may find the Doctrine and Principles of Popery, and with what Arguments they pretend to be most strong, and make use in defence thereof; comprised with an obvious plainness in the Questions here proposed, and some clear view of their direct opposition to the Scripture, and reason, in the Answers thereto; so as in a very small time, these for whom it is most designed, may by reading it sometimes over, have it so far impressed on them, as to know how to answer and give some solid account of the Protestant Doctrine, and the grosness of Popery, when assaulted by any Seducers. Nor I hope is there any ground to censure this as unnecessary, that learned and judicious Mr.* Pools Dialogues *have gone before for such an end, (which is a most choice and useful piece in this day), from what the Reader may discern is peculiarly designed here, and was I may say before I had seen the same. How sad is it, that so many professed Protestants now in this age, yea such as are serious in profession of the truth, know not more the solidity and clear founding of the Protestant Doctrine in its opposition to Popery, when the abounding of Atheism hath made such way for this as a flood to break in on the Church.*

What mistakes may in some words be from the Press, I hope are such as the judicious Reader can discern without darkening the sense, and will pardon.

Lam. 3. 23.

*Great is thy faithfulneſs.*

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## CAP. I.

THE Prophet being taught of God, to endite a Lamentation for the Church under her Captivity, and to incite this almoſt cruſhed people to a duty ſuiting their preſent caſe, which was not to faint, or have their hands falling down on their loins, but that their eye might affect their heart with ſome feeling impreſſion of ſuch a ſtroke; hath a remarkable pauſe here, and ſweatly draws his breath, in reflecting on the way of the Lord, what a mixture there was of mercy as well as of judgment in ſo deplorable a ſtate,

as is clear, *ver.*21, *This I re-call to mind, therefore have I hope, &c.* And thus having once got under his ſight ſome appearances (though ſmall) of light and comfort, in ſo thick a darkneſs, he quits not that ſent, until he have the faithfulneſs of God made as convincing to this people, in his compaſſion and tenderneſs, as in his ſeverity.

Some things are obſervable here for clearing the Text, which in a few words I ſhall touch.

1. The time and condition of the *Jewiſh* Church, when ſo great a witneſs is thus given; it was under the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, even whilſt the devaſtation of their land, the ſad ruines of the City and Temple was before them; when Viſion did fail the Prophets, the ways of *Zion* mourned, her people fell into the enemies hand, and there was none to help; to ſhew what may be laid in their way for ſtrengthening, who are in earneſt to eſſay it; and how a cruſhed and dead hope may have its very firſt quickning in the grave.

2. It is here we ſee a moſt rare contexture betwixt the firſt and latter part of the verſe; and how indiſſoluble a tye there is betwixt truth and mercy, which to divide

vide were no more poſſible, than to have a conception of day-light without the Sun; truth being the fountain-cauſe that brings mercy forth, and therefore *are they new every morning, becauſe great is his faithfulneſs.*

3. We may ſee the peculiar intent of this Scripture, to hold forth the unſpotted faithfulneſs of God in ſo ſad a time; which is that Attribute amongſt his glorious Excellencies, he hath choſen in a ſpecial manner for revealing himſelf to men, as eminently expreſſive of his Being, Veracity, and Power; the Rectitude and Immutability of his Nature; a truth, though we cannot comprehend (for the neareſt approaches of reaſon here, will ſtill leave us at an infinite diſtance), yet are we called to an humble enquiry, for our further joy and eſtabliſhment in the Faith thereof.

4. The making out of this great Attribute muſt be underſtood with reſpect to the written word, and theſe expreſs engagements exhibit there to the Church, where the holy God by a marvelous condeſcention, hath ſet bounds to himſelf, with a liberty for all fleſh, to challenge if his truth there does in any thing fail; And

thus is it clear, how his works are done in faithfulneſs and truth; not only in an exact conformity to that eternal Idea thereof in the divine underſtanding, but to his revealed Councels in the Scripture, which is the adequate ſign of his antient purpoſe and decrees in all that concern the Church, and the conduct of Providence within time.

5. The preſent advantage of ſo clear a teſtimony to the truth for that time, is obſervable to acquit the way of the Lord under theſe dark and ſhaking providences; and let men ſee with what an uninterrupted courſe his faithfulneſs doth ſtill ſhine, whatever clouds interpoſe between them and it; yea how great a ſtability is in the worſt of times for the Churches intereſt, and for all that a Chriſtian can adventure on this bleſſed ſecurity, whilſt every day gives ſo ſad an account of humane props. Now from the Text thus cleared, I ſhall premiſe ſome few Doctrinal truths.

*Doct.* 1. They run not that errand in vain, whoſe work is to commend the way of the Lord in a dark time; for it ſhall commend it ſelf to them; nor will they want ſtrengthening remarks of his truth and

and tenderneſs, who hath a ſerious obſerving eye for them. Thus we find the Church was taken up in a fainting hour of trial, and what ſucceſs it had. It is true, a Chriſtians eſſays for this end, may ſometimes be like that of *Elijah*'s ſervant, to go once and again, yea to ſeven times and ſee nothing; and the firſt breaking up of their hope, have ſo ſmall an appearance as the hand-breadth of that Cloud had to him, though at laſt it made the heavens black therewith, and the return as large as its delay ſeemed long; but whatever thus from the Lord is for trial, it is ſure the faithful improving of a little this way, muſt ſtill lead into a growing ſtrength, and a ſerious aim to keep up the credit of the truth both on their own heart and with others, can leave none behind. Oh what rare mercies lye oft hid under ſome dark and afflicting providences, even whilſt they are at our hand, and are not ſeen, from the frowardneſs of an imbittered ſpirit, that will not let its own eyes ſee the advantage of ſuch a caſe; but as if they did well to be angry againſt God, will quarrel more his croſſing their humour, than obſerve his tenderneſs for promoting their

real good, and cry againſt him, becauſe he will not undo them.

*Doct.* 2. They are on a choice ſent, for their ſolid ſtrengthening in the truth, let the times be never ſo ſhaking, whoſe work is to keep ſight and follow with their eye the faithfulneſs of God in the providences of their life; yea does ſo follow this in their mercies, as that which is to them the better part of ſuch a mercy, when it brings ſomething confirming with it to the truth, and for their eſtabliſhment that way. Thus was the Church here at work in a ſad time, and through the whole Scripture is remarkable; did *Jacob* divide theſe in his obſerving, *Gen.* 32. 10, *I am not worthy of the leaſt of thy mercies, and of the faithfulneſs thou haſt ſhewed to thy ſervant*; or in his pleading with God, *v.* 12, *And thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do the good.* And how concerned was *David*, to have them ſtill kept together in his view, mercy and truth, as in *Pſal.* 25. 10. 52. 8. 89. 1, 2. But oh it ſeems ſuch in theſe times have had ſome other ſight and conception of this duty than is now underſtood; and thus have ſought a more near intercourſe with the truth and certainty

of

of the Lords being God, with which in the very notion thereof, our converſe this day ſeems to be rare.

*Doct* 3. What-ever eſſays men have to darken the *faithfulneſs* of God in his word, yet is it ſuch as muſt be ſhewed forth, and every time pay in ſome tribute thereto; therefore is ſo remarkable a cry here, to awake mens ſpirits for obſerving this, *Great is his faithfulneſs.* It is his praiſe and declarative glory in the earth, the ultimate end of his works, that point where all the lines of providence at laſt do meet, and therefore cannot want an Herauld, though the ſtones of the ground ſhould ariſe to ſpeak it forth; for a greater neceſſity is here, than for the fire to burn, or the ſparks to flye upward, that the glory of the only true God, in the verification of his word be from one generation to another witneſſed. So excellent an uſe is this, that a Chriſtian ſhould think he lives, and hath ſuch a deſirable being, that in his day he may put to this ſeal, that *God is true*; nor needs any fear whatever time or capacity they are in, that it's in earneſt they level at ſuch a mark and miſs it. O what pleaſure is thus found, which the voluptuous man

never knew; and how far is it above all he can have, or ſo much as apprehend in his wallowing in ſenſuality.

I ſuppoſe a Chriſtian at ſuch a ſtrait, that he could but ſpeak four words to the world, and be ſtruck dumb through the reſt of his time; and that upon this account he were pained, how to ſpeak them to moſt advantage, could he eaſe his Soul more, or have a choice beyond this for giving glory to God, when he might ſay ſo little then here, *Great is his faithfulneſs.*

*Doct.* 4. That it is not a flouriſhing ſtate of the Church only, and her riſing, but her ruin alſo does convincingly ſhew forth this. From this Scripture may be clear; yea is the voice of the rod as well as of the word, where both mercy and judgment meet in the ſame witneſs; and though the bitterneſs of ſin, and that ſad eclipſe it cauſeth betwixt God and the Soul, is ſad indeed, yet is it ſuch as may be no leſs for a Chriſtians confirming in the truth than the joy of his preſence. If dark and afflicting times were not, how much of the Bible were as loſt, and its uſe wholly fruſtrate? we ſtand amazed at ſome ter-

rible

rible acts of the Lord in the earth, but consider not whose errand they go, and for what end, that it is to let men see, *when he turns a defenced City into a ruinous heap, his Councels of old are faithfulness and truth*, *Isa.* 25. 1, 2. which if they will not see in the word, read it they must, though it should be in characters of blood.

*Doct.* 5. It is a begun Cure to the Church, and so far a day-break under the darkest trial, as there is a clearing of the way of the Lord, that in faithfulness and truth he hath done it. Thus in so dismal time, when *Judah* was a wilderness, and *Jerusalem* a desolation, and their ruines such, as if destruction needed not to arise the second time; we may see how this was as the turning the light side of their trouble towards them; when once they knew where they were, and how all that was gone over their head did confirm his unspotted faithfulness; for thus they may be further perswaded of the Lords being God, and how he gives his word a being in the most amazing acts of judgment; they see his glory shine forth here, and that great end secured, wherein they are

to

to rejoice what-ever miſcarrying be of other inferior ends; thus however the ſtorm blow, and though the earth ſhould all be in a combuſtion, this greateſt intereſt is ſure, which is the faithfulneſs of God, they know it ſtands unmovable, and no loſs or ſhipwrack there, on which more than all that is within time they have in dependance; yea, here the credit of the truth is cleared, the darkneſs of the trial is ſo far gone, and the Church brought to the light, to ſee both the cauſe and cure of her ſtroke, and needs not grope to find the door for an out-gate.

*Doct.* 6. There is a ſeaſon and advantage duty hath, that gives a peculiar beauty thereto; which the Prophet does here notice, and thus is preſſed to own the *faithfulneſs of God*, when the faith of many was ready to be ſhaken with the ſtrange providences of that time. They are indeed bleſſed, who ſow beſides all waters, and find their work wherever it is laid to their hand; and it is ſure, where love gets the command over the heart, thoſe cannot want an advantage for their maſters ſervice; nor can they loſe ſuch a talent, but by laying it uſe aſide; yet

yet ſad experience can alſo ſhew, how difficult the work of the preſent day does oft prove to the next, and that the ſeaſon of duty, and for ſome ſervice to the truth, may be ſuch a tide, as will not flow twice in one life.

*Doct.* 7. It is not a truth only, what theſe words do aſſert; but there is an infinite *greatneſs* applicable to it above all created things; the diſcovery whereof did cauſe ſo aſtoniſhing a tranſport here, *Great is his faithfulneſs*; a truth which none can over-ſpeak, yea where no poſſible hyperbole could ever be; and as no age of the Church hath wanted cauſe for ſuch a witneſs, I muſt ſay, none ſtands more debtor to this than the preſent time. This is the theam and ſubject to be followed forth here, which under the ſence of peculiar engagements thereto, and ſome impreſſion of the Majeſty of God, whoſe declarative Glory in the earth is ſo much concerned therein, and ſo viſibly impugned this day by many of the generation, I deſire to adventure on, and to offer humbly ſome further light to what I have elſewhere eſſayed on ſo great a ſubject; and in the firſt place ſome clear demonſtrative grounds

grounds of that infinite Greatneſs, to which no Angels nor men may or can lay claim; I ſhall but in a few words inſtance.

Firſt, How *great* is it, where ſuch aſſurances are given to the Church, that the Lord muſt ceaſe to be God, and thoſe viſible heavens and earth ceaſe to have a being, before his faithfulneſs in one jot of the written word fail. This is that ground the Chriſtians faith hath in the darkeſt day to caſt anchor on, and it is ſure, is no bottoming on a dream, when it is ſuch *wherein it is impoſſible for God to lye, Heb.6.* 18. *Et cui non poteſt ſubeſſe falſum.* Contingency hath no dominion here, nor mans free will, whoſe riſe and working is within time; but his word is that before which all fleſh muſt keep ſilent, *my councel ſhall ſtand, ſaith the Lord, and I will do all my pleaſure*; to which all ſecond cauſes, both in their operation and purpoſe are indiſſolubly linked.

2. Is it not *great* whereon ſuch a weight does this day lean, which is no leſs than that burthen of the viſible heavens and earth, with their continued order and courſe, the whole militant Church, the everlaſting ſtate and bleſſedneſs of the elect,

elect, and all their intereſts within time, which are on this great foundation rolled over and ſure; yea, it is here the perſonal weights and burthen of every one of the Saints, the up-riſing of the afflicted and bowed down, the credit and ſupport of many, whoſe alone ſecurity for their daily bread is the promiſe of God; and their venture whoſe *believing in hope* is ſuch oft, *that it is againſt hope*, and all viſible appearances, which on this alone ground are enſured; the leaſt part whereof were enough to ſink us, if that were not to bear all up, *Great is his faithfulneſs.*

3. How infinitely *great* is this, in the import thereof; which (I am ſure) if underſtood, we could not in ſo ordinary way look upon the Scripture, when it is no leſs than an infallible aſſurance given from heaven to the Church, and here upon earth put on record for things of higheſt concernment; wherein before Angels and men it is enſured by him who lives for ever and ever.

1. That whilſt time is, the ordinances of heaven, ſhall continue as they are, there ſhall be Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harveſt; and therefore even he who ſoweth the ground ſhould ſow it in hope.

2. That

2. That the world ſhall be no more deluged by rain, for which the written word is our alone ſecurity.

3. That as the Lord is God, his Church ſhall be continued in the earth, and a ſeed to ſerve him whilſt the Sun and Moon endures.

4. That none of the Saints ſhall be *utterly caſt down*, or by any temptation ruined, as to final Apoſtacy, *being kept by the power of God, through faith unto ſalvation*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5.

5. That he on whom help is laid, *ſhall be ſatisfied with the travel of his ſoul; ſhall ſee his ſeed, and prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand*, *Iſa.* 53. 10. Yea, no nullity or revocation ſhall for ever be of that bleſſed Indenture he hath made with his Church.

6. That he will make them what he hath required them to be; and his own promiſe ſhall be the ſpring of theſe qualifications annexed thereto.

7. That none can condemn, whom Jeſus Chriſt hath juſtified, and to his alone righteouſneſs hath fled for their refuge.

8. That they ſhall be for ever with God,

God, and *received into glory*, *whom he guides by his Counſel here.* Thus for all theſe great intereſts does his faithfulneſs ſtand good; and what yet remains to perfect the whole work of providence in the earth, the Chriſtians conduct and ſupport in his journey, their ſafe paſſage through death, yea the keeping of their duſt in the grave, and a raiſing of the ſame body at the laſt day.

4. His faithfulneſs is *great*, in that continued courſe it hath had with the Church ſince the beginning of time to this day, and never loſt ground, but is ſtill the ſame, and with the ſame ſtrength hath ſhined under all theſe aſſaults hath been for its darkening. It was at the firſt being of the Creation, that ſo great a light begun to dawn, *when the morning ſtars ſung together, and the ſons of God ſhouted for joy.* What a tranſport muſt this have been when theſe bleſſed triumphant ſpirits the Angels could in one moment ſee themſelves brought out of pure nothing, into that ineffable light of ſeeing God, with ſo clear a diſcovery of his Name and Attributes. It is true, there is a gradual light and opening up of the truth, and ſome more ſignal periods of time, to which a brighter

brighter ſhining forth of the faithfulneſs of God hath its reſpect. There was a vail over the times of the Old Teſtament, and Scripture-truths then much ſealed up, nor was the Lord ſo remarkably known by his Name *Jehova*, *Exod.* 3. 8, in giving a being to his promiſes. But now are come theſe bleſſed times of the New Teſtament, whoſe work is to open up what then was ſealed, and bring forth ſuch long deſired truths to a viſible performance; though this alſo hath a more peculiar reſpect to theſe laſt ages in which we now are fallen; and it is ſure, were this once finiſhed, and that the written word had done its work, for what concerns the Church within time, there ſhould be no more to do, but the glorious faithfulneſs of God, which never yet ceaſed to ſhine (though with a gradual aſcent) had gone its courſe, and were at the full and perfect day.

5. This alſo is *great* in the extent and theſe large bounds, where this day it ſhines forth, which is not in the viſible Church only, or where the fame of the Goſpel is ſpread, (though there alone it is believed and known), but goeth as far as the whole work and conduct of providence through the earth; for in no corner ſo remote or dark

dark, does this want a witneſs; it being clear, 1. That as far as the power of a natural Conſcience is, and where men are conſtrained to obſerve a power higher than man, to difference betwixt good and evil, even there is its taking place diſplayed. 2. Where the Sun doth riſe and go down, and the raging Sea hath its appointed bounds; for theſe do witneſs through the whole earth, that God, whoſe promiſe and appointment they are, and which no humane power could poſſibly effectuate, is *faithful* and *true*. 3. This muſt ſhine forth, and have the extent of its diſcovery in as large a bounds, as there is men; who cannot exert reaſon, and not ſee that marvelous order and dependence of things which is through the Creation: ſo that though they know not the word, yet is this truth of it in ſuch great letters written out, as all may read, upon the heavens and the earth, *His work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment*, *Deut.* 32. 4. 4. What a viſible witneſs hath this, in the greateſt darkneſs and barbarity of the earth? yea upon ſuch an account, that ſo great a part thereof lyeth as an out-field, without that pale and incloſure the Goſpel hath made? for it is ſure, here is an ob-

vious ſeal to the Scripture, as well as the being and flouriſhing of the Church. 5. Which is more marvelous, it is not in the dark places of the earth only, but in that place of horror and utter darkneſs, where this doth eminently ſhine forth; for it is there thoſe unſpeakable torments, with the continued cries of the damned in hell do never ceaſe, nor never will, to bear ſuch a witneſs, God is *faithful* and *true*; no poſſible atheiſm can be there, whoſe felt experience doth force them to know, that God is what his word declared him to be, in that unſpotted attribute of his Juſtice. Yea, if a full hiſtory could be writ of this world, what in all times hath occurred both to Nations and particular perſons, (if this were poſſible) what elſe would it be found, but as a great and exact hiſtory of the Bible, where the greateſt Atheiſt might ſee theſe truths they read there writ in moſt viſible realities before them, *Et quod mundus nihil aliud eſt, quam Deus explicatus ſecundum Scripturam?*

6. What cauſe hath the Church to witneſs, Great is the faithfulneſs of God, from its product, I mean thoſe great and wonderful events of the Scripture, in which this day it hath a viſible performance before

fore us; ſuch events, which all may ſee a power above nature, and the energy of natural cauſes could only bring forth; yea, that theſe are not at a diſtance, but ſo near, as if our eyes be not ſhut, a ſeal to the truth, greater than miracles or any extraordinary ſigns that ever were given to the Church, might be found at our hand. This is a ſubject of great import, to confirm and moſt ſolidly fix the Saints in the faith of the word, in ſo ſhaking a time, which were it underſtood, no diſcovery within time could more help to make our joy full. Which before I touch in ſome particular inſtances, where its truth and certainty may be demonſtrate, I ſhall firſt offer theſe few things to be previouſly conſidered for giving light thereto.

Firſt, It is undeniable, and we are eye-witneſſes thereto, that ſuch events of the Scripture are, yea before the world brought forth, which can be clearly evinced to fall under no poſſibility of ſecond cauſes; and are not ſome rare contingencies apt to beget admiration amongſt men, by reaſon of their ignorance, but ſuch that do as evidently witneſs a divine and ſupernatural power, exerted therein, for bringing them

forth, as there is in raiſing the dead, dividing the Sea, or cauſing the Sun to ſtand ſtill in its ordinary courſe.

2. It may be clearly evinced, Theſe are ſuch events, that no humane knowledg could have poſſibly foreſeen, or from principles of reaſon have found the leaſt ground to conjecture their falling out; and are not natural verities, which from any imbred notions thereof in the Soul, could have ever had a riſe in our thoughts, if by the written word ſo great a diſcovery had not come.

3. As a further witneſs to their truth, and that here can be no poſſible impoſture or deceit, we ſee a moſt perfect Idea and comprehenſion of all theſe marvelous events in the Scripture, that are thus brought forth in our view, which as we read them there, ſo are they certainly found to take place, and the one not more viſibly clear than the other.

4. Since the neareſt objects do moſt excite and affect men, if they be of no leſs weight than theſe are tranſmitted at a diſtance; this advantage hath the Church here, in theſe great and wonderful events of the Scripture, that it is not on others credit and teſtimony they are to admit ſuch things,

things, but may come near and ſee with their eyes the truth thereof, yea how it is known as it were by ſenſible touch and feeling; there is I confeſs an unanſwerable atteſtation of the truth by extraordinary miracles, which with the firſt dawning of the Goſpel were given to the Church yet we ſee (though ſuch want not, beſide Divine Authority, moſt clear demonſtrative grounds of their certainty to reaſon) how little weight theſe are found to have to affect or convince the world, looking thereon at ſo great a diſtance of time; ſo hard it is for men to be ſuitably ſtirred up with any thing that is not in our preſent ſight.

5. Such are theſe wonderful events of the Scripture (here in ſome inſtances after touched) that all may ſee they are not a tranſient glance, which at ſome rare time only have been found to fall out; but it can be demonſtrated, the greateſt miracles the Church ever knew, are yet in her ſight, and have been continued under the New Teſtament, by that marvelous verification of the Word unto men; though ſome of theſe which have reſpect to ſome ſpecial periods of time, are now more conſpicuous, and evidently brought forth in

theſe laſt ages of the Church. O what a ſtroke is it on our reaſon, that the moſt immediate and viſible appearances of God do not affect, or have that deep impreſſion on the mind, if they be not extraordinary and new! Thus in the greateſt things of Nature, how much is the world taken with a Monſter, that doth little regard the bringing forth of a perfect Man, which is indeed more wonderful; we look with amazement on a Meteor, who with ſmall reſpect can paſs by thoſe glorious bodies of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, (I confeſs, theſe rare glances of a divine extraordinary power calls aloud for mens grave and ſerious obſerving, and ſome other improvement, than by moſt uſe to be made thereof). But it is ſure, the Church this day wants not miracles, which is not conſidered, that in no ſtrange and extraordinary path theſe now are to be ſought, but in that high and beaten road of the Scripture, and its accompliſhment. And therefore is it, that theſe unuſual appearances of God, which in the Churches infancy were ſuited to awake men to an advertence to the truth, and confirm the ſame, do this day ceaſe, becauſe the unſealing of the Scripture in the times of the New Teſtament, was to bring greater

things

things forth before us for confirming the truth, which are to be found by our taking heed to this more ſure word of propheſie that countervails all theſe. But thus he goes by on our right and left hand, yet men perceive not, and do not truly ſee or underſtand what they ſee.

6. Since it is ſure, the event of things here in the world is that about which mens minds are moſt taken up; and we ſee what preſſing deſire there is to know the tranſactions of the time, and what is falling out in the earth, though it be nothing of their perſonal concernments. Oh! how ſtrange is this, that the great events of the Scripture that are of ſuch high import for a more full aſſurance of the Lords being God, the certainty of his truth, and of that unconceivable glory in heaven with him for ever; theſe go by us with almoſt no inquiry or regard. Here is indeed a matter of aſtoniſhment, how men read the Bible, do profeſſedly own it, yet nothing preſſed in their ſpirit to know if ſuch marvelous things as are there, do really fall out in the event, whilſt ſuch are of neareſt concernment, and offer themſelves to every ones trial by experience, ſo that none needs take them on truſt.

Having premiſed theſe things for giving ſome light to the preſent ſubject, I ſhall here ſum up what in this following diſcourſe is further intended in theſe four particulars: 1. Theſe clear and undeniable inſtances we have now before us of ſuch events of the written word, where the immediate appearance of God, and a power above natural cauſes in bringing them forth is ſo clearly witneſſed, that we may ſee things no leſs great and wonderful at this day wait the Church to confirm the truth, than any extraordinary miracles that in former times were known. 2. The import of this demonſtration, with that marvelous light which thence breaks up would be ſeriouſly conſidered, that lets us ſee, there are higher degrees of aſſurance and eſtabliſhment about the certainty of the Scripture to be reached, than ſeems by moſt Chriſtians to be underſtood; for which beſide the cleareſt evidences of reaſon, ſuch a demonſtration is given to our ſenſe of the truth, and theſe great advantages laid to our hand for believing, that might make our adventuring thereon as clear and comfortable a way, yea with that full ſecurity to ſatisfie the Soul, as the way of ſenſe and feeling could do. 3. Whence it is, that Chriſtians aſſu-

rance

rance and ſolid confirmation about the truth is ſo little proportioned to the greatneſs of the ſeal and atteſtation thereof that is before us. Its objective evidence ſo large and marvelous a thing, while that ſubjective certainty within the Soul, which this calls for, is ſo little underſtood. 4. How excellent an uſe and improvement of this ſubject might be made, I intend here alſo to touch.

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## CAP. II.

FOR the firſt, It ſeems a ſtrange inadvertence, how ſuch events of the Scripture are brought forth to the world, and this day viſible in our ſight, yet in ſuch an ordinary way looked on, yea as if we were more aſleep than waking; when if men quit not the uſe of reaſon, they cannot but ſee theſe both in the diſcovery and bringing forth thereof are above humane reach; about which that great appeal *Elijah* made, 1 *King.* 21, 22, to an extraordinary anſwer from the Lord, when the people were halting betwixt two opinions, and he ſaid, *the God that anſwers by fire, let*

*let him be God*, may be here made uſe of, I may ſay, to a greater deciſion, and witneſs for the certainty of his Word, that men would come and ſee, if he be not aſſuredly God, and this his undoubted truth and teſtimony, which hath ſo marvelous a birth and verification this day in our ſight, that all the *Magicians* in the earth could never counterfeit; yea, more fully demonſtrative of a divine ſupernatural power, than if we had ſo extraordinary a ſign, as that which was then given *Elijah* from heaven before all the people.

*Sect.* 1. Firſt, There is this rare *frame* and *contrivance* of the Scripture, and what a fulneſs and perfection it hath, as it is the record it bears to it ſelf. *Pſal.* 19. 7. & 119. 129. in which its truth ſo diſcernible in the event, that if mens eyes be not ſhut, here may be a continued cauſe for wondering ſet before them; ſuch, that amongſt the greateſt works of God under the Sun, and all created excellencies, there is none like this, nor can be until the written word give place to immediate viſion. O what a real miracle is the Bible, for ſuch is it in it ſelf, in its whole frame and contexture; that though it had no atteſtation

elſe

elſe by the works of God, it might be an unanſwerable ſeal to its own truth. It is indeed ſtrange, ſo great a light ſhines, and ſurrounds men with its brightneſs, and yet they are ſo little affected therewith; that ſuch a demonſtration of the glorious God, and a work which all may ſee is above humane perfection, helps not more to cure the Atheiſm of the world; who if they would but come near and conſider this great wonder, might clearly ſee: 1. That here is nothing wanting which the Church now in the world hath need of, or could in an extraordinary way ſeek from heaven; and yet is there nothing redundant or ſuperfluous; the whole race of the Saints, from the beginning to this day, could not have wiſhed it another thing than it is, though a latitude had been given them, which ſo anſwers all times and ages of the Church, as if only framed for the preſent time. No Chriſtian but this takes by the hand, and to all that is in their caſe is ſo ſuited, as if for them alone it were an immediate gift and meſſage from heaven. 2. This doth enlighten the whole work of God, and keeps exactly foot with each foot-ſtep of providence in the earth, which comprehends in its lap and boſome every event,

event, ſmall and great, that in due ſeaſon is diſcloſed within time; no deep of Satan ſuch, that it doth not diſcover, nor is there a work of darkneſs hid from its light. The Church never knew her hazard, but might find it was there ſeen and foretold; yea, the eternal Counſels and Decrees of heaven, and what is concluded there, which neither Angels nor men could ſearch into, are here ſet open in our view; and that greateſt depth of Election thus ſo far unvailed, and brought down before our eyes, that men can be no more ſure ſuch ſhall be ſaved, who are predeſtinate to life, were there acceſs to read their names in that ſecret roll of the Decree, than from the Scripture it is ſure ſuch are elect, and ſhall undoubtedly be ſaved, who have come to Jeſus Chriſt in the acceptation of the offer of the Goſpel. 3. Let us come near, to look to this great wonder, that with ſuch a light diſcovers the whole Creation, and lets us know, what ſuch a ſight and theſe marvelous things therein mean, which elſe ſhould be unintelligible, and as a dark maſs before us; this that draws by the vail, and ſhews that rare image of ſpiritual truth in theſe things that are obvious to our ſenſes; and how the inviſible things

of

of God, his eternal Power and Godhead, are by things ſeen ſhewed forth; for thus is the great fabrick of Nature diſcloſed in its original, its continued courſe, that indiſſoluble chain of ſecond cauſes, and how high a riſe it hath in their dependences, until they touch heaven, where all theſe links are faſt tyed to his unchangeable purpoſe; yea, thus is it by the written word, that the Heavens and Earth as two great Volumes are ſpread forth, and made eaſie for men to read, ſo as without this bleſſed conduct, it is clear, no poſſible communion a Chriſtian could have with himſelf, with the works of Creation, with the daily occurrences of providence, or one Chriſtian with another. 4. Here men may ſee that marvelous contexture and ſeries of truths, how none ſtands alone, but ſo linked with a mutual correſpondence to give light one to another, that each has it peculiar room and uſe for anſwering the whole frame, and not one pin there wrong placed, but all every-where uniform, and like it ſelf, amidſt ſo great a variety of matter, and diſtance of times, moſt wonderfully joined and knit by one corner ſtone Jeſus Chriſt, who is that bleſſed point in whom all its lines do meet, and as the Soul which enlivens

livens the whole body of the Scripture. And it is ſure, on whatſoever part of Scripture a Miniſter preach, he does miſs the greateſt ſcope of that Text, if it lead not into the Goſpel, and his Doctrine thence be not thus pointing with ſome clear tendency towards Jeſus Chriſt. O what a ſight is here, could it be truly underſtood what is before our eyes! 5. Thus we ſee, it is framed (which the Former of all things could only do) to correſpond with the inward man, and exerciſe an authority over the conſcience, and our moſt retired thoughts as well as our actings, and how this and this alone hath brought to light that marvelous and unknown paſſage betwixt the Soul and an inviſible world, to have in one moment ſo immediate a converſe with heaven, and from it, and thus to make its continual reſort there; yea, lets us ſee the way for ſo near a converſe with God, which we know by ſureſt experience to be ſuch as it is there revealed. 6. I muſt further add, what a peculiar weight and ſignificancy are the words of this great record found to have (I mean the Original) by which the holy Ghoſt hath choſen to convey the truth unto men, which no language, no humane skill can expreſs

expreſs to the full, or is able to give the ſenſe of that marvelous πάθος and life in expreſſion, and of theſe idiotiſms there, but one age muſt ſtill leave it to another for further enquiry and ſearch.

*Sect.* 2. That great Scripture-truth we ſee in the event, and the certainty of its taking place, which could never have entered in mens thoughts, if thus it had not been made known, That there is a *ſpiritual* and *new Creation*, ſuch a rare ſtructure and workmanſhip, wherein the glory of God in his Attributes doth more eminently ſhine forth, than in the being and frame of theſe viſible heavens and earth; here is indeed a great diſcovery, though theſe ordinary thoughts moſt have of it, may bring it in queſtion, that either this is but a romance, and not really believed, or our reaſon muſt be in a ſtrange ſleep, who know ſo little the weight and import of ſuch a truth. But queſtion this who will, it is ſure, ſuch as ever knew the reality of Religion, can be of nothing more perſwaded than they are here: 1. That ſuch a truth they read in the Bible, and is expreſly there ſhewed forth, which nature never taught the world, but to this day ſhould have

have been a *terra incognita* without Scripture-light; ſee *Eph.* 1.19. 2.10. *Jam.* 1.18. 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. Nor is it a dark view there given of ſuch a thing, but a moſt perfect Idea and model of this workmanſhip to the leaſt pin thereof, which is thus ſet forth before us. 2. That as it is written, and brought to light, ſo is it certainly found to be a truth. Here is no world in the Moon, or the viſions of mens heads, but ſuch a Creation do the Saints know, and hath been their witneſs'd, ſince ſuch a ſeed was in the earth, upon as clear demonſtrative grounds as men can have of this viſible world they now are in; That the being and reality of grace and a ſpiritual life, theſe felt enjoyments of God, and his workings in the Soul, are truths by experience found, and do exactly anſwer the pattern thereof which was ſent down from heaven, and exhibited to us in the Bible. Theſe know there is a living holineſs, which even to others may be as diſcernible as that there is a living man upon the earth; and a ſecond impreſſion which the Law hath on the heart, as we ſee it with Ink before us in the Scripture. I know, to ſuch who have their Soul ſunk in the earth, this may be as a night-dream.

But

But do men debate there is a truth in theſe diſcoveries of *America*, when now for ſome ages, by ſo many thouſands who have been there, and have a continued trade with theſe parts, it is atteſted: Yet a greater witneſs to this truth and its undoubted certainty is here, from the whole race of the Saints, ſince the beginning of time to this day, whoſe record we know to be true, except we ſhould deny there is a Sun when we ſee it with its own light.

3. It is ſure, here is an immediate influence from heaven, and its continued neceſſity to conſerve this bleſſed Creation, as diſcernible as that of the influence of the heavens on the earth; nor can the parched ground more need the falling down of rain, than this is found to have of a new watering to cauſe it to ſpring.

4. Thus it is known, there is another air to breath in, than what is ſuited to our natural life; and another Sun than that in the firmament, to convey both light and heat to the Soul; yea, a being brought near, and laid under theſe warming beams; and indeed ſuch a bleſſed aprication, as men can know in the moſt hot reflex of the Summers Sun; and that here alſo are over-cloudings and dark

hours, as diſcernible as it is ſure that the earth hath her night & cloudy times. 5. This is ſuch a Creation, where as obvious a contexture and conſent there is in all its parts, as we may ſee in this great fabrick of Nature, yea ſuch where no *vacuum* or empty diſcontinuity can poſſibility be found.

*Sect.* 3. We ſee it verified, and before us in the event, which natural underſtanding could never know or comprehend, if it were not reveal'd in the Scripture, That there is a *creating of the fruit of the lips*, *Iſa.* 57. 19. Such a product and fruit of the Goſpel by the miniſtry of men to be found, that is no leſs wonderful and demonſtrative of an immediate divine power, than to create and give things a being by the word out of nothing. Here is indeed an aſtoniſhing thing, which if a truth, it is then ſure we ſee with our eyes a ſeal to the Scripture that is beyond theſe miracles which in a more extraordinary way have been given to the Church. Is it a humane work? or could it poſſibly be the fruit of mens lips, that brings forth ſuch realities and wonderful effects in the earth? Could moral ſwaſion, or a ſound of air and words (yea where no previous

vious matter to work on can be alledged) have that effect, which ſo viſibly is above the reach of ſecond cauſes? Now that this is a truth there is no demonſtration in nature more evident; That the fruit of mens lips by the miniſtry of the Goſpel, is a Creation indeed, I offer theſe undeniable inſtances: 1. What a power muſt it be, that can turn the word preached into a real act, and reſolve what is as a tranſient ſound into ſuch an undoubted reality of life and feeling; yea, turns the Word ſown by the miniſtry of men, into vital principles within the Soul. What a ſight were it, to ſee ſome of the ſtones of the ground riſe up at the ſpeaking of ſome words in the viſible appearance of men. Yet here certainly is ſomething no leſs marvelous, were it underſtood. 2. To turn the Pagan world to be Chriſtian, and there-with a throwing-down of their Temples, & abandoning that worſhip and profound veneration, which for ſo vaſt a ſpace of time, the Nations once had to their gods; yea, this by the word of the Goſpel, without might or power; Is it not truly ſuch a thing as to bring a new world forth in our ſight, and a Creation indeed? It is true, many ages are paſt ſince

this was; yet is it of ſuch import, a revolution ſo famous and publick through the earth, and of that unanſwerable evidence, that this day, as a new and continued wonder, it might be as ſtill preſent in our ſight. And can this poſſibly be forgot, what the known records of theſe times, which we have in our hands, continue to tell us; how ſtrange a face ſome ages ago there was upon the world, and what a change (for which humane reaſon could never find a cauſe) hath followed; that ſo long a rooted Religion ſhould be forced to diſappear, and this by an unſeen power with the Goſpel, that did not ſtrive, nor cry out. So as now, for many ages *Jupiter* is no more known, nor hath *Diana* her Temple or *Apollo* his Oracles; but theſe found to be ſuch gods as in *Elijah*'s time who could neither help nor plead their own cauſe, whilſt their friends contended for them, nor could they be once awakened to appear for their intereſts. O what a continued miracle is this, that no diſtance of time can bring in debate, or alledg a poſſible deceit or impoſture therein! 3. Is it not more than humane, and the viſible product of an immediate power from heaven, that awe and authority with the preached

preached Goſpel, which is found on theſe who hate it, not only to beget a feigned ſubjection, but in truth and effect ſome ſubjecting of their conſcience? for it is ſeen where no viſible motive is, no hazard from without to influence ſuch a thing, how many millions have ſuch a force put on them by a power which themſelves do not underſtand, to fear and regard that name, and thus pay homage to the Goſpel, in whoſe Soul there is a real and inbred enmity thereto? this is a marvelous thing, what an awe and dread is put on moſt of the Chriſtian world, even upon their conſcience, that would make them ſtand with an horror and trembling to abandon Chriſtianity in whom a real hatred to the truth and power thereof is ſo diſcernible. 4. It is an unanſwerable evidence, this can be no humane work, but an immediate Creation of God, which is in bringing forth the *fruit of the lips* by the miniſtry of men; that the greateſt effects of the Goſpel in the world, hath in all ages had this known remark therewith, to be more found by the doctrine of the Croſs, and the plainneſs and ſimplicity of the truth, than by the wiſdom of words, or the furtheſt perſwaſives of humane eloquence; to witneſs,

that it is not art, or the excitement of mens words but there is an evidence and demonſtration of the Spirit, an elivening air and ſound, that is moſt diſcernible from the words of theſe who are puffed up. And thus is it evident, that the Kingdom of God is not in word, but power; and how the truth hath a ſelf-evidencing light therewith, and that native luſtre which no humane invention could ever reach; a Painter may repreſent the lively colours of a flower to admiration, but no art can give forth its fragrancy and vital ſcent.

*Sect.* 4. How great a diſcovery of the truth of the Scripture is this, which hath in all times been known by the Saints in the event, as certainly as they know they live and breath in the air, That *it is God who worketh all their works in them, Iſa.* 26. 12! I confeſs, one of the depths of Religion is here, the world cannot reach, and theſe who pretend that freedom and command within their Soul, which hath no dependance on a ſupernatural influence and power, will not know; but ſure and known it is, that I muſt ſay, if the evidence and certainty ſuch have, who are

Chriſti-

Chriſtians indeed, could be witneſſed to others,) and their experience reſolved in words, as they know it in truth, the world would be then forced to ſee a debate about this is as ſtrange as theirs who would queſtion, if there be a truth in motion, or if day-light be a dream and deluſion, or not. The Soul is one of the rareſt pieces of the whole Creation of God; and it is here as on a Stage and Theater, the greateſt of his works are wrought, yea ſuch that a Chriſtian cannot but know to be his immediate working; which 1. He finds is ſo far above his own reach to bring forth, if he be not a great ſtranger to himſelf. 2. Such he finds by no moral arguments or the influence of outward means could poſſibly be effectuate; and how little, with the greateſt abundance of theſe is oft to be found, of a power or effectual working thereby on the Soul? 3. Theſe he can clearly ſee whoſe work they are, by bringing them to that teſt of the written word for their trial. 4. They are ſuch works as are not ſeen at a diſtance, but lie ſo near, that a Chriſtian can retire within himſelf, and there have ſo clear and unanſwerable evidence of a Godhead and the truth of his word, that I muſt ſay,

were this great demonſtration more purſued, of the Lords coming near to men in his immediate working on their Soul, with a deeper reflexion thereon, ſuch a degree of aſſurance about the truth, might this way be reached, that even by moſt of ſerious Chriſtians ſeems not to be ſuppoſed or ſought after; this is a price for wiſdom in our hand, that few know how to improve.

Having premiſed theſe, I ſhall here offer in ſome Inſtances, how great a diſcovery the Saints thus have of the Lords being God, and the certainty of his Truth, by that they know and ſee of his immediate work within their Soul.

1. How oft he cauſeth a day-break of light and life, by a marvelous ſurpriſe to ariſe within, when nothing but darkneſs can be ſeen without, like a Sunſhine at midnight, is a truth not more truly promiſed to the upright than it is found, *Pſal.* 112. 4.

2. His cauſing their peace to abound, when ſurrounded every-where with trouble and diſtreſs; for whence could ſuch a thing poſſibly be, if it were not from Heaven, to rejoyce in tribulation, and find that which cauſeth them take pleaſure in perſecution,

cution, in neceſſities, and reproach for Chriſts ſake? *Joh.* 16. 2. 2 *Cor.* 2. 9. Yet this is known and experienced.

3. The reſtoring their Soul by a preſent and ſenſible relief, when it hath been ready to fail, and give over, as under a *Deliquium*; which was *Davids* witneſs, *Pſal.* 23. 3. Is it not found that if not immediately from above, no other way it could have come?

4. How there is a ſenſible impowering of a Chriſtian in the inward man to wreſtle and follow hard after God, under ſoreſt preſſures from without, ſo that he knows the call to this in the Word, is not more diſcernible than his being cauſed to approach by a felt influence, and power on the Soul, *Pſal.* 65. 4. how great a witneſs is thus to be had of the truth, and that ſurely the Lord is God?

5. Nothing can be more known than this is to the Saints, that ſurpriſing influence which is oft on their Faith to cauſe them hope on the Word, and have a ſatisfied reſting thereon, without anxiety, which all their former Eſſays could not do; yea this, when no outward appearance hath given the leaſt advantage, but their difficulties on that hand ſeemed more to

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encreaſe; muſt not this be immediately from Heaven, and above all natural cauſes? ſee *Pſal.* 119. 49. *&* *Pſal.* 142. 3. what an account is there given.

6. It is ſure none of the Saints but may know whoſe work it is, that in one moment can enlarge their Soul, and put it a-going with an eaſie and unconſtrained motion after their duty, who were before ſo ſenſibly clogged and fettered therein; and how marvelous a change *the blowing of ſuch a gale hath cauſed*; where nothing from any outward cauſe could be found for it; *e're ever I was aware my Soul made me like the chariots of a willing people*, Cant. 6. 12.

7. It is no leſs diſcernible how the weight and preſſure of their burden is oft remarkably taken off, which was before like to ſink them, even when the burden lyeth as ſore upon them from outward cauſes as ever, yea nothing to lighten it that way, but finds there is *a ſtaying the rough wind, in the day of the Eaſt-wind*, *Iſa.* 27. 8. and how in their near approach to him, ſuch a perſwaſion he can beget in their Soul of a delivery which ſeemed moſt hopeleſs from any preſent appearance, that all anxiety, and diſquiet

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is then gone, and taken off their ſpirit.

8. Thus is he known to be God on the Souls of his people, who can ſubject the Will with its own conſent, to follow the dictate of an enlightened underſtanding, and effectually determine it, which once no moral arguments or reaſon could do, ſo that the heart is as it were ſtollen and caught away, yet with a conſtraint, but ſuch as hath a moſt diſcernible congruity betwixt that drawing power, and their greateſt liberty, *Cant.* 1.4.

*Sect.* 5. Here is a wonderful thing, and a *moſt convincing Seal to the truth, this day in our ſight*, if our eyes were but awake to regard it, *that the natural man cannot ſee, or perceive the things of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. How ſuch a darkneſs ſhould be, That the moſt ſearching ſpirits, who in the depths & ſubtilties of nature exceed the ordinary reach of men, yet here are blind, though they know it not, and whileſt they exerciſe their reaſon, and judgment, about the truths of the Goſpel, where ſo great a light ſhines forth, yet are theſe hid from their eyes, and they verily ſhut out from the Bible, even while they read it, ſo as they cannot ſee that

that which makes the ſimple wiſe. Oh what a thing ſhould this be were it underſtood! and how clear and demonſtrative an evidence is it of the truth, a darkneſs which doth no leſs confirm the Scripture of God, than that marvelous light which ſhines therein to others. It is ſtrange how far men would go to ſee ſome extraordinary Miracle wrought, or ſuch a place of the earth, in which the light did brightly ſhine, when at that preſent time, nothing but darkneſs were to be ſeen round about; but is not here ſomething no leſs marvelous, and undoubtedly ſure, which now is before us, if we could come near to ſee.

1. Though it were not ſhewed us in the written word, it is ſure and undeniable ſuch muſt be in the dark, let them pretend what they will, and do not really ſee nor underſtand, what in the Scripture is moſt plain, who can on theſe Rocks and Precipices ſo confidently run, which would cauſe an unexpreſſible fear and horror, if they had that ſight thereof, which others have from the ſame truths, they ſeem to converſe with.

2. That there is a reality in this ſtrange darkneſs (though it is a dream to the world)

world) is ſure, and known by Chriſtian experience, not only at their firſt entry into a ſpiritual ſtate, what a marvelous light then breaks up, which they never underſtood before, or had the leaſt conception of; but in their after-walk what a ſight and diſcovery is to be had ſometimes of a Scripture-truth, that if they would give all the world for it they cannot have at other times.

3. And is not this ſuch a darkneſs, whence it is demonſtratively clear, there muſt be a Supernatural evidence and diſcovery of the Scripture, which from the light of reaſon and nature do not in degree but in kind differ, as truly as the light of the Sun is from that of a candle.

4. Thus it is not the revealing of truths to us with the greateſt objective perſpicuity can enlighten, until once it be *revealed in us.* But though men have a natural faculty of underſtanding, and no want of light in the object, and *medium*, yet doth it ſhine in on ſuch a darkneſs that comprehends it not, nor can receive and diſcern Spiritual things ſpiritually.

5. Here needs not only a faculty and

and habitual illumination, but a preſent and actual irradiation of the mind therewith, and an immediate diſpoſing of the Soul to go forth and receive the truth, as it is repreſented in its true luſter and beauty.

6. Thus we may clearly ſee there is ſuch a thing as a real evidence, and perception of divine truth, and a ſeeing it with our eyes, that others only ſee in a map; with which there is alſo a transforming the Soul into the very things there contained, and a changing it into the ſpirituality of the Word, which as it is there written forth unto us, we know, and are ſure its record is true; and ſo is it found.

*Sect. 6.* It is an undoubted event of the Scripture where men *may ſee a witneſs to the truth, no leſs convincing*, than of the moſt extraordinary Miracles, *that a Spiritual ſeed ſhould be kept up in the earth*, which doth not fail or wear out, under all eſſays to ruin the ſame: But ſuch an excellent *ſpecies* of Chriſtians in its kind as viſibly tranſmitted through all ages by a continued ſucceſſion as that of Mankind. It is ſure this was promiſed

to

to the Church, *Iſa.* 53. 10. *Pſal.* 89.4,29. and to this preſent time is it not ſeen how marvelouſly it hath taken place; yea, what an extraordinary appearance of God is there if theſe were rightly underſtood? 1. That Humane race can boaſt of no longer continuance in the earth, than this bleſſed Seed can do; for with *Adams* Fall did Chriſtianity firſt break up that to this day lives, yea without interruption hath been perpetuated, not in a ſhadow, but in truth and reality; and ſince that time did the Sun never ſhine in ſo diſmal a day, when it could be ſaid, there were men in the Earth, but no Chriſtians, or that the Church did die without an heir and offſpring. 2. How could this poſſibly be without an immediate povver from Heaven, vvhere a continued War hath been on foot theſe five thouſand years and more to vvear ſuch a ſeed out, vvhilſt vve ſee vvhat length of time can do in the World; and that a War vvithout Ceſſation, vvere it but for one age, could not fail in an ordinary vvay to depopulate, and vvear out the moſt flouriſhing Countries. 3. Such a War and enmity is this vvhich thus hath been kept up, that

as is not againſt the Godly ſo much, as that Divine image they bear, and not Chriſtians, but the truth of Chriſtianity. 4. Which makes this vvonder the greater, vve ſee the party ſtated in the quarrel againſt ſuch a ſeed, is not ſpiritual wickedneſs only, or the united concurrence of men, but the very nature of man now depraved, and not an enmity, that is tranſient or taken up, but doth as naturally deſcend from one race to another, with in-bred principles, as it is for men to eat, or ſleep; ſo that it may be ſaid humane race doth not more naturally move to the preſerving its own kind, than to deſtroy this. 5. How far is this above nature, or the poſſibility of ſecond cauſes, when it is ſo clear, not one of that continued race of the Saints, but muſt have a new life and being from heaven, elſe not at all; hath no humane progenitors, but is the immediate off-ſpring of God, and no womb to bring forth ſuch a birth, but his eternal counſel and decree. One Chriſtian cannot beget another, but it is as great and marvelous a work the bringing forth of the meaneſt of the Saints to have ſuch a new ſtate and being, as to make of a piece of red clay a living

living perſon. 6. Thus is there not a viſible diſcovery of the being of God, and certainty of the word, when it is ſo evident, the continued flux of time, and its changes cannot abate the power and efficacy of divine truth; but with each following age is ſo convincingly ſhewed forth, as can witneſs the Goſpel does not ſpend its ſtrength through length of time, but is ſtill, wherever it comes, as a new gift to the world, which hath the fulneſs of a bleſſing therewith, even when from other places, it wants not ſome fatal periods and judicial departure. 7. How great a wonder is here, if we could conſider what diſmal times have gone ſo oft over the Church, and that impetuous torrent of Error and Atheiſm which hath threatned no leſs than at once to ſwallow up all ſerious Religion amongſt men; ſo that the continuing of ſuch an intereſt this day in the earth, and that Chriſtianity ſtill lives, yea not in a ſhadow, but in truth, is truly no leſs marvelous than the preſerving mankind in the Ark when all fleſh periſhed, which by an immediate power from heaven was ſo viſibly then ſecured; and ſuch that we may fear a ſelf-oblivion, and wearing out of humane race

will ſooner take place, than the failing of this excellent *ſpecies*.

*Sect.* 7. It is ſure, we ſee in the event, what the Scripture only could reveal, and all may know to be no natural verity, That *ſuch an union there is in one ſpiritual nature, and an oneneſs in kind among the Saints, as we know there is a certainty of the being of mankind*, and that agreement which in the ſame nature men have with other; a truth clearly held forth to us, 1 *Cor.* 12. 11. *Eph.* 4. 3. 2 *Pet.* 1. 14. and its taking place ſo great a witneſs and demonſtration of the word, that I muſt ſay, were this underſtood might be more convincing, than if every day were to bring forth ſome extraordinary miracles before us. But for further clearing, let us conſider theſe two, 1. How it is ſure, there is a reality in this, and that it may be as evidently ſeen as we read it in the Bible. 2. Of what great import this is, for a more full perſwaſion upon our Soul of the truth.

As to the firſt, They muſt ſhut their eyes (I mean ſuch as know any thing of the power of religion) if they know not theſe undeniable evidences of its certainty: 1. That there is one ſpiritual taſte and

and ſavour of the things of God, which every-where and in all times is known by the Saints, though it be not in the ſame vigor at every time, but from the prevalence of the fleſh hath oft a ſenſible abatement and wearing out; yet is a truth, by experience ſo witneſſed, that to ſuch who are Chriſtians indeed, and partakers of a new nature, this may be called *proprium quarto modo.* 2. When in any vigor that nature exerts it ſelf, is not ſuch a ſympathy alſo found with it, that all may ſee no outward intereſts or humane ties have had weight to influence the ſame; but where grace doth remarkably ſhine in one, it will help to excite and draw it forth in another, with as real a ſympathy as can be found on the neareſt ties and union in nature. 3. Is there not a particular ſuiting of the ſame means every-where to ſuch a nature, as praying, meditation, hearing of the word, *&c.* ſo as no change of climate, and no place in the earth ſo remote, where there is a real Chriſtian, but theſe do as naturally anſwer thereto, as our daily bread can do to this body? yea here alſo are the ſame oppoſites (which to the bleſſed nature are deſtructive) no leſs diſcernable. 4. And

are not the ſame effects and characteriſtical operations of ſuch a nature through all ages known among the Saints? that as it is eaſie to diſcern a man by ſigns and marks peculiar to his kind from a beaſt, it is clear, there are alſo breathings after God, and ſoul-converſe with him, that are as inſeparably annexed to a real Chriſtian; yea, but one center here where all the ſtirrings and beating of this ſpiriritual life do as natively tend as the ſparks fly upward. 5. It is clear, what-ever difference is in the way and manner of the conveyance of grace to a Chriſtians Soul, yet there is but one ſpring and original of ſuch a new nature; and how this is no moral ſuaſion or any external cauſe, but is found to be an immediate power from heaven, by the revealed Goſpel, which in all of that kind doth beget the ſame image and reſemblance of the ſecond *Adam*, as truly as that of the firſt is to be found in his off-ſpring. 6. Here alſo is a marvelous oneneſs in experience of the truth, to which none of the Saints through the earth can be a ſtranger; how quickening, ſtrengthening, and refreſhing influences are certainly let forth by the word in their ſerious following duty.

Now

Now as theſe are demonſtratively clear, let us conſider of how great weight and import ſuch a truth is, if our thoughts could be more ſtayed thereon: 1. To witneſs the reality of Godlineſs, and that the being of a Chriſtian is no more a ſhadow, than the being of a living man. 2. That this can be no tranſient diſpoſition, which the times, the temperament of the body, or outward cauſes might influence; but the reality of a new creature, which riſeth further above the nature of man, than it in its higheſt elevation is above the nature of beaſts. 3. Thus we may ſee, whatever differences are amongſt the truly godly, to which their corruption, darkneſs of mind, and contrariety of natural diſpoſitions is oft found to give a ſad riſe, yet theſe can no way reach ſerious godlineſs a blow; it being clear ſuch a new nature is, where they all meet with a marvelous oneneſs and correſpond in the ſpecifick properties of a Chriſtian. 4. Thus they can know and diſcern their own kind, are mutually diſcloſed to other, by ſonear an intercourſe of their ſouls, that if ſuch a ſurpriſe were, for one Chriſtian to find another in ſome remote part of the world, to whom the Lord in ſome

extraordinary way had revealed himſelf, and had never known what converſe with any ſuch was; O what a natural warming one to another, and feeling intercourſe ſhould there be found upon this mutual diſcovery, even as the meeting of two men in a land inhabited only by beaſts would cauſe to ſee their own kind.

*Sect.* 8. How wonderful an event of the Scripture, which yet in all times is ſo certainly known, are theſe contrary effects the Goſpel hath on men, when to ſome it is a *ſavour of death*, that is a *ſavour of life* unto others, 2 *Cor.* 2. 14, 15. *Act.* 28. 24. for it is ſure no natural cauſe, nor the influence of outward inſtruments can in this ſtrange thing be alledged, that men exerciſing reaſon, who have the ſame inbred fears and hopes of things eternal, and by nature alike paſſions with others, yea have Souls in the ſame capacity to be wrought on by moral inducements, ſhould by the very ſame means be ſo differently influenced to ſuch contrary effects, that whereat one ſtumbles, others are ſaved and ſtrengthened; one made further dead, and become as a ſtone, by that means which begets tenderneſs and weeping in others; yea

yea one made to tremble, and his joints to ſhake at the word, while they who are below them in a natural courage are not at all moved, but wonders what ſhould affright them by ſuch a ſound; Thus alſo is it, that ſome are made to hear a voice beyond words, *& ſine ſtrepitu ſyllabarum*, which is ſurely known upon his Soul to be his beloveds voice, while theſe who ſit by can diſcern no ſuch thing. O what is this? which if it were known aright, I muſt ſay is as viſible and immediate an appearance of God, as the working of any miracle that ever was, when here men may convincingly ſee, 1. How it is not of him that willeth or runneth, but there is a divine breath and air that is from heaven immediately, while at the ſame time it goes by others unperceived. 2. That here none are maſters of their own motion, nor can any previous diſpoſition from nature be alledged to give the word of the Goſpel an advantage upon ſome more than others; and it is ſure no humane reaſon can find a cauſe for it from without, why ſuch a mean at the very ſame time ſhould beget love in ſome and hatred in others, that when to the world the opening up of divine truth is fooliſhneſs, others ſhould be

then ſtruck with amazement at ſo great a diſcovery of the wiſdom of God there. 3. Is it not ſeen alſo, how ſurpriſing and unexpected this oft is found to be, that the more rude and ſtubborn in their nature are ſo remarkably oft influenced by the word, while on theſe who are more poliſhed and refined, there is no ſuch ſtirring. 4. And may it not be eaſie to ſee the truth of an innate quality; whence ſome feed and ſuck honey from the ſame mean out of which others draw forth poiſon; and though no perſwaſions of men can take off that inbred averſion to ſpiritual things, or change ſuch an impoiſoned nature, yet is there a divine power found to do this.

*Sect.* 9. It is a great event of the Scripture, *where we may ſee the truth near, and a viſible demonſtration of God before our eyes in theſe ſpiritual gifts given under the new Teſtament to the Church, and for her uſe*; which as it is expreſly held forth to us, *Pſal.*68.18. 1 *Cor.*12.14. ſo is its taking place clear and undeniable even before the world this day, with ſo immediate a witneſs from heaven to the truth and Ordinances of the Goſpel, as might force a con-

conviction on the greateſt Atheiſts of the being of God, and certainty of his word. Theſe are ſo manifeſt, 1. How ſuch ſpiritual gifts are not ſimply acquired, but they are given; which by no skill or means could be attained, if there were not an immediate convey from above, though this doth not juſtle with that commanded uſe of means for their further improvement. 2. That theſe are ſuch as men may ſee have no dependance or neceſſary connexion with gifts meerly natural; but the moſt excellent endowments of nature, if alone, are found to be a poor ſhadow to ſerve the Church, and that they are not ſuited for ſuch an end, though of ſingular uſe in their own place. 3. Theſe are gifts that we ſee do not ceaſe or wear out, where there is a divine miſſion, and wherever the Church is a building; but when once there is a judicial time, upon ſome particular Church, it may be then eaſie to diſcern how both gifts and grace are a going, and a gradual departure both of light and heat. 4. And are they not ſuch with which the world is forced to ſee a marvelous energy and power for their enlivening, yea ſomething of a ſpiritual air and breath, and another ſa-

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vour and evidence, to witneſs theſe gifts are not only given, but the uſe and exerciſe thereof muſt have an immediate intercourſe with heaven, and that ſurely there is ſomething beyond words or the reach of all humane invention in bringing forth the truth, even a ſupernatural influence, that the moſt eminently ſpiritual miniſter hath not to diſpoſe of at his pleaſure; but I muſt ſay, the with-drawing of this ſometimes may be as ſtrengthening a remark, and of no leſs uſe to edifie the Church, than the moſt diſcernible enlargements at other times. 5. As a more viſible acceſſion of theſe gifts now to the Church in the times of the new Teſtament, is clear; it may be ſeen alſo, how a divine incitement is ſometimes eminently ſhewed forth for their improvement and exerciſe; yea how theſe are then ſuited for the uſe and ſervice of ſuch a time, that its's ſure, no remarkable exigence of the Church did need a ſpiritual gift, but it was found, and ſome called forth, the hand of the Lord being ſtrong upon them for ſuch an end. It is indeed ſtrange among other great evidences of the truth, that this ſhould not be more convincing, and how moſt paſs it with ſuch ordinary thoughts,

that

that 1. Is ſo clear and demonſtrative an evidence, that the Churches head does aſſuredly live, whom though we ſee not, yet cannot but ſee a real and effectual communication he hath with his body upon earth, as we are ſure there is a Sun that ſhines in the firmament, when there is ſo ſenſible a diffuſion of light, and heat from it. 2. Thus is there a viſible witneſs from heaven to that marvelous erection of the Church here, with its peculiar offices and ſervice, as it is a politick body, and that the authority and extract of a ſtanding miniſtry under the Goſpel is not only from above, but thence alſo are its continued furniture and endowments, by a very immediate intercourſe. 3. Thus we may have a great diſcovery of the Lords being God. I have oft thought, a ſerious and faithful miniſter of Chriſt, who knows in following his work, what near converſe with his Maſter, and a cloſe immediate dependance on him is in the exerciſe of theſe gifts; hath a peculiar advantage, for ſome rare and ſingular confirmations of the truth upon his Soul, which are much hid from others; and though theſe who look on at a diſtance, cannot know ſuch immediate approaches

proaches of the Lord, and marvelous impreſſions as theſe left on their Soul, when brought near to him, or what may be betwixt a ſerious humble Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt and his maſter; yet is there not ſome glance of ſuch a thing, and a waffe as it were of the glorious God doth go by to the diſcerning of others, as will force this conviction; here muſt be ſomething more than humane; and that a near and real intercourſe betwixt heaven and men upon earth is no empty ſhow.

*Sect.* 10. Is it not an undeniable event of the Scripture, when the immediate appearance of God, and of a power above nature can only be ſeen to bring it forth: *theſe more ſolemn times, and high-ſpring-tides of the power, and efficacy of the Word, which are found to accompany the preached Goſpel*, as the breaking in of a flood, that hath a force therewith which nothing then can reſiſt; we know ſuch a thing is clear from the Scripture, that ſo great and effectual a door is ſometimes opened to the Church, 2 *Cor.* 2.12, 19. 1 *Theſ.* 1.5. and it is ſure this is known and witneſſed to the world, not only with

with the firſt times of the Goſpel, but in theſe laſt ages; ſo as it may be ſeen, the Sun doth not more certainly return in the Spring and Summer to the Earth, than that ſuch great Revolutions have their time alſo of falling in with the Church, ſuch that all may ſee, 1. Muſt be an immediate Divine Power, that can ſhut the Churches womb, and open it, yea bring forth ſuch a wonder before our eyes, as is *Iſa.* 66. 7, 8. *that a Nation ſhould be born at once, and for the Earth to bring forth in one day.* 2. Such times as clearly ſhew this is the very finger of God, by that ſwift diſpatch, the work of the Goſpel then hath when a few days or years are ſeen to bring in more to the Church, than ſometimes hath been the product of an age; what ſtupendious, and full draughts are in this day of the power of the Goſpel, yea how inſtruments are then viſibly acted forth above their ordinary reach. 3. Whoſe work this is, all may know, which is ſo clear to have no dependence on men, on their painfulneſs, or that advantage of the moſt excellent natural Endowments, but ſuch a marvelous encreaſe is thus found to the Church, when it is ſo diſcernable at other times,

how

how the moſt choice and eminent inſtruments are oft put to caſt out the Net with ſore toyl, and labour, and catch nothing, the tyde being once ſpent and gone, and it is clear from no appearances of nature or reaſon could this be inferred, to ſhew it is above the reach of all the Diviners in the world, where the Stars and their conjunction can have no influence. 4. Beſide the real effects then of the Goſpel may it not be eaſie to ſee an unuſual brightneſs and heat go forth with ſuch times, theſe glances of a Divine Power and Majeſty with the Ordinances, as cauſeth amazement; and how then the Truth gets ſuch acceptation, that Miniſters will be in more hazard from the over-ſtretching of their Hearers love and reſpect, then from contempt. 5. To witneſs here is a work viſibly above nature, and the power of ſecond cauſes, is not the opening of ſuch an effectual door, and greateſt oppoſition from men, moſt uſually found to meet; and how ſuch a marvelous income by the Goſpel, when leaſt of outward incitements are to be a bate. But a time of many falling off, and ſtumbling at the trouble and reproach which attend the truth, is oft ſeen to be the time of bring-

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ing others forward, yea with that ſtrong affection and deſire, which nothing but the ſight of an inviſible God, and an immediate power on the Soul could do; this is no Romance or fiction, but is a ſeal, and witneſs from Heaven to the truth, ſuch as the world cannot deny, that it muſt be his work, and his alone, who is able to ſubdue all *things to himſelf*, *when he thus doth rend the Heavens and come down*, to make the Mountains flow down at his preſence.

*Sect.* 11. Could we ſee or regard, what is before us, here is a viſible diſcovery of God, and of the certainty of his truth in his making out that promiſe; Mat. 12. 12. & 25. 29. *that unto every one who hath it ſhall be given*; how a remuneration and increaſe doth indeed follow the Chriſtians work, and a vigorous activity to improve his little, as is there written forth, yea ſuch that may be clearly ſeen, is above all that mens endeavour and diligence in an ordinary way could have promiſed, but muſt be immediately from Heaven, and as the undoubted effect of the promiſe. Now

ſome

ſome few convincing remarks of this truth, which hath been clearly witneſſed through all times of the Church, I ſhall here offer. 1. How ſurpriſing an iſſue moſt hopeleſs eſſays at duty with ſoreſt wreſtlings oft have had to the Chriſtians advantage, yea even to admiration, when they cannot but ſee, how great difficulties were made the way to lead into their greateſt mercies, and that *better is the end of a thing than the beginning.* 2. That marvelous outcome the improvement of a little ſtrength for the Church and ſervice of their Generation is oft found to have, which though it doth not appear for many days, yet ſuch is it ſeen to be in the cloſe, that in no ordinary vvay, or from viſible appearances could have been expected. 3. Hovv the ſeed vvas never loſt, vvhich vvas ſovvn to the Spirit, but in due time hath returned bringing the ſheaves vvith it, and that theſe do not loſe their vvork, but it is found ſtill to abide vvith an inexpreſſible comfort and joy thence vvhere there is a doing for God, and a ſingle intending him in it. 4. That to *abound in the work of the Lord*, vvas never in vain, but in all times hath ſuch an increaſe as makes the difference betwixt them in the

the reaping, and thoſe who ſowed ſparingly moſt diſcernible. 5. That no lot or trial of a Chriſtian was ever ſo ſad, but ſuch an improvement is to be made thereof, to make it a help to their joy, and let them ſee no providence can come in their way, but brings their mercy and upmaking with it, if the work and duty whereat it points lye not behind. 6. Thus is it found alſo how the unſeen work of the Saints in ſecret prayer, and doing for the Lord without the witneſs of men, wants not an open reward, and that a hid growth to the root, and under the ground ſhall be ſo far ſeen, that their profiting may appear to all men. 7. There is a giving which viſibly tends to enrich the giver; *and ſuch liberal devices, by which men are found to ſtand* with a greater income even to the diſcerning of the world, than all the exceſſive care and griping of others hath reaped. 8. Is it not clearly ſeen, how the drawing forth of the Soul to feed the Church, by ſuch as are called thereto, is the way to make themſelves fat; and in watering others, theſe alſo are watered. 9. How ſuch as have choſen affliction rather than ſin, in that day have found it given them to ſuffer with ſo preſent an

income of ſtrength, as hath made it not to their own aſtoniſhment only, but of others alſo, eaſie and ſweet; the appearance whereof at a diſtance was ready to faint them; yea thus it may be truly ſaid, that ſomething in the faith of the Martyrs for the truth hath been oft no leſs wonderful than in the faith of Miracles. 1 c. It is known, how ſtrengthening remarks and confirmations from the Lord of his truth, waits ſuch that ſeek them, and a ſerious reaching at leſſer things for this end hath greater added; and that mercies then want not ſomething confirming to their faith therewith, where it is looked after as the better part of their mercy. But to what a Volume ſhould known inſtances of this truth amount; theſe few things are here only touched, to witneſs how great a diſcovery of God, and of his immediate appearance in bringing forth ſo marvelous a Promiſe is before our eyes, that we may ſee no connexion in nature is more ſure and indiſſoluble, than that which is betwixt the Chriſtians work and his encreaſe; and amidſt theſe ſtrange uncertainties and diſappointments which are this day, how this doth not fail, that the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſtill peace, and he who ſoweth

may

may ſow in hope; yea, ſuch a ſeen bleſſing is there on the loweſt ſize and meaſure of the labouring Chriſtian, according to the promiſe, as to make their little grow, and bring up the laſt to be firſt.

*Sect.* 12. What the Scripture only could ſhew, is it not a truth may be convincingly ſeen in the event, that even here there is *an immediate falling into the hand of the living God*, *Heb.* 10. 31. And ſuch ſtrokes ſhewed forth on men, which are evident to be above mans ſtrength to inflict, or his capacity to comprehend, if they were not fore-told in the word. It is ſure, ſuch a ſeal the truth hath this day, and that theſe acts of divine judgment are ſeen to occur; for which no humane knowledg by ſecond cauſes could find either the cauſe or the cure, but do with the very firſt view preſent the awful appearance of God, and conſtrains the conſcience to acknowledg his immediate hand, & how theſe can be no caſual adventure, but are a viſible out-making of the Scripture. Some particular inſtances I ſhall here offer, which the world cannot bring under debate, they are ſo known and clear a witneſs to this truth.

Firſt, As there is a great diverſity of

influence and operation the Lord hath on the ſpirits of men; this may be a marvelous evidence thereof; A *ſtroke of infatuation* from his hand on mens counſel and judgment, where no viſible cauſe or previous defect of this could be alledged, but is ſuch that all may ſee is immediately from the Lord in verifying of this truth. Thus how ſtrange a faint and amazement at ordinary difficulties, a fatal precipitance in their motion without regard to circumſtances, the ſeaſon and opportunity of things is then witneſſed, ſo as in the noon day they cannot underſtand their way, but made to grope as in the darkeſt night. I am ſure the world can be no ſtranger to ſuch a ſight, nor to theſe remarks of an immediate divine hand therein, if they would but open their eyes. 1. That here cannot be ſome ſtrange accident in nature, when it is ſo clear an out-making of the Scripture, and the very ſame wonder repeated which *Eſay* ſpeaks of *ch.* 24. 14, when *the wiſdom of the wiſe ſhould fail, and the counſel of the prudent be hid.* 2. Is ſuch a ſtroke, where a remarkable taking away that ſtaff on which they ſeemed moſt to lean may be then ſeen, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence. 3. A ſtroke that all

all muſt confeſs is above the influence or conjunction of the ſtars, and no product of natural cauſes, when not a perſon only, but a people this is ſeen to reach, and not the vile, but the honourable and ancient, to ſhew it is from the Lord of hoſts, *that the Princes of Zoan are fools, and her wiſe Counſellors bruitiſh*, ſaith *Iſaiah*, *ch.* 22. And there alſo is the reaſon given, why ſuch can neither ſee nor prevent what is ſo evidently before them, *becauſe he hath purpoſed it, and it muſt come to paſs.* 4. This remark alſo may be clear, of ſuch a ſtroke, how convincingly it falls in with the time of a People or Nations judgment, and when ſome great change is drawing nigh. 5. And muſt not the world ſee a power here above them, who thus by an inviſible hand can give a ſtroke which none is able to cure, and make a people work their own ruin more than all their adverſaries; to ſhew, that judgment hath many arrows in its quiver, and no counſel or wiſdom can be againſt the Lord.

2. Thus there is an immediate *falling into the hands of the living God* may be witneſſed, when the *ſcourge ſlays ſuddenly, and in a moment makes diſpatch*, *Job* 9. ſuch as an extraordinary plague and contagion,

that brings quick deſolation therewith; ſome amazing fires, which as a lightening turns a City into a ruinous heap; ſuch alſo are theſe immediate ſtrokes of a divine hand on particular perſons, that admit no parley, but are done before ere they be once apprehended; theſe are indeed prodigies of judgment, though from no age they are hid, which without a bruitiſh ſtupidity may be clearly ſeen to be no common or caſual occurrents, but a ſupernatural cauſality is there, and the immediate appearance of that God, in whoſe hand, as an adverſary, it is a terrible thing to fall, whoſe power can reach a City or Nation, as well as a particular perſon.

3. To witneſs this truth, There is nothing more obvious than an immediate delivery of ſome unto Satan, and under his power for judgment, yea how viſible ſo ſtrange and amazing a ſtroke is to be from the Lord; when ſuch are then ſeen, 1. To blaſpheme and rage againſt him, when his hand is upon them, *Rev.* 16. 11. 2. That a mans eyes *ſhould ſee his own deſtruction*, when yet he will not ceaſe to oppoſe himſelf to ſuch a divine power, even whilſt he finds it purſuing him, *Iſa.* 26. 11. 3. This may be clearly known in that im-

immediate power of the Devil over ſome to enforce their own aſſaſſination; for it is ſure, ſuch aſtoniſhing inſtances there are, where no *delirium* or want of reaſon could be alledged, and ſomething more than a violent inticement within made here obvious, like an immediate delivering of ſuch up to Satan as an Executioner; and where, not only a violent hurrying and incitement thereto is then diſcernible, but ſo much may be ſeen from the ſtrange way it is brought about, as ſhews an actual concurrence of the Devil, and his hand is viſible at ſuch a work. This is indeed one of the ſtrange depths of the judgment of God, where men may ſee a Malefactor is not more evidently delivered over to the ſtroke of juſtice, and put in the executioners hand, than ſome thus are given over to Satan to act ſuch a part upon them. *Achitophel* and *Judas* whoſe judgment was immediately from heaven, wanted not a Burrier from hell to execute that ſentence; I know the choiceſt of the Saints may be thus aſſaulted, for whom preventing grace hath oft marvelouſly appeared; yea, that ſome have been actually carried the length of ſuch an horrid ſelf-aſſaſſination under a natural diſtemper, of whom

otherwiſe we ſhould be very tender to judg. This only in ſuch ſtupendious inſtances is to ſhew how near and viſible an approach of God oft is in ſome ſtrokes of his hand, and that *there is a ſtrange puniſhment to the workers of iniquity*, *Job* 31. 3.

4. Thus is there an immediate appearance of God, and his hand convincingly witneſſed in the *delivering up even ſome of* the *Saints unto Satan for trial*; which not only may be ſeen in their outward ſtate by a ſtrange unuſual appointment of imbittering things, that then are at once found to meet to make a croſs ſharp, like a reacting of *Job*'s caſe in ſome degree, and of that method the Devil uſed in that aſſault; but which is more ſtrange and moſt diſcernible, what is found on the Soul by theſe horrid injections, and impetuous incitements within to blaſpheme, and to have thoughts here that are *horribilia de Deo, & terribilia de fide*; where it may be judged ſome of theſe motions, that the damned in hell continually have do there offer to infect the Chriſtians Soul; what an aſſault this might have been in that meſſenger of Satan *Paul* had to buffet him, the Scripture does not particularly witneſs: but it

is clear, *Job* was no ſtranger to theſe invenomed arrows, and ſome approach that way no leſs to his Soul and the inward man, than his body was ſore and pained. Now in ſetting down this inſtance, I only intend to ſhew how ſuch a ſtrange trial by an extraordinary power and influence of the Devil there is, and certainly known to the Saints, that may witneſs, how eaſie it is for the Lord to raiſe a ſtorm within, amidſt the greateſt peace and calm without, ſuch as all the world cannot make ſtill; and how ſore an immediate touch of his hand on the Soul and Conſcience is as well as the body, yea how then it may be clearly ſeen to be ſomething above natural cauſes. 1. In that horror and conſternation is therewith, to which no pain or torment in the fleſh can be compared. 2. That it is no a ſingular and rare inſtance, but in all times ſuch an aſſault have many of the Saints had, though I know its ſuppoſed ſingularity makes it the more terrible to ſome. 3. That in the ſame way and method it is ſtill remarkably ſhaped 4. Yea, where no defect of natural judgment and parts to influence ſuch a thing can in the leaſt be ſeen. 5. How viſible a force this is from without, injecting that which can have no correſpondence

dence with their corruption within, but is ſuch, that even corrupt nature is affrighted at. 6. Such that diſcernibly takes advantage and gains ground by fear, and flying before it. 7. I ſhall add but this, as theſe have their lucid intervals, in this caſe it is known alſo, how prayer and ſerious wreſtling with God by the Mediator hath been ſtill its beſt cure, and found more effectual here than all Phyſicians, as being a wound from that hand which goes above all humane reach and skill.

*Sect.* 13. One inſtance more I ſhall add, to what hath been held forth on this ſubject, how near an approach of that great truth is even here; and a begun diſcovery in the event of the *ſtate and condition of men beyond time*, that *there is a Heaven and a Hell after this life*, and death is not the laſt point to put a final period to a rational being. I confeſs this is one of the greateſt objects of our faith, and whatever preſent thoughts we can now have thereof, yet ſuch is that glorious eſtate above, and the horrour of Hell, as will be an unſpeakable ſurpriſe to all who come there, and find that they never had a conception of before; but it is ſure alſo that even here more may be

be witneſſed to mens ſenſes, with that demonſtrative evidence of the truth, both of the one and the other, yea in ſome degree begun upon the Earth, than moſt are aware of, or will let themſelves know. It is ſtrange how little this ſeems to be underſtood, and what diſtance we have in our thoughts, with the being, and reality of theſe great things, as if Heaven and Hell, were ſome abſtract notions only, which lie hid in the Scripture, and conſider not what near and ſenſible approaches of both are here.

As to the firſt, that glorious ſtate of the Saints above, how marvelous a diſcovery is of this, and that begun enjoyment thereof even here; when a Chriſtan ſo aſſuredly knows 1. in how large a meaſure the joy of his preſence is let forth, the fulneſs whereof is this day in Heaven, with theſe ſenſible embraces betwixt Jeſus Chriſt and the Soul, which are found above all expreſſion; and that this muſt certainly be ſome part of the pleaſure above, which having no affinity with the fleſh, bring in ſuch ſerenity and calmneſs to the heart, and doth afford that ſolace and true delight which the whole Earth could not do. 2. As it is ſure, there is a clear and ſenſible perception of Spiri-

Spiritual Objects the Saints have in this life, which to men by nature are as far above their reach, as the things of another world; is not ſomething alſo here to be known of that glorified eye the redeemed have above, by that near capacity the pure in heart are put in to ſee God; which is more than ſeems to be believed. 3. It is known and ſure, how marvelous transforming that is by grace of the Soul, and in ſo far a removing its earthly quality, ſo as to make it even in this preſent ſtate tranſparent, and pure in part, that the light of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt may ſhine in them. Yea thus what a diſcernible ripening there is and making ſuch meet for that ſtate above, by all theſe degrees of a Chriſtians growth here, whereby they are changed from glory to glory, which really is ſome kind of a begun tranſlation of the Saints to Heaven, as there is a coming further up to that full ſtature of the man in Chriſt. 4. We know there is a near and immediate converſe with God here ſenſibly enjoyed, which no words can make others know what the Saints thus ſee and feel, as theſe near approaches to Heaven this way; but ſuch a certainty is found thereof,

thereof, that no dying Chriſtian but with ſome confidence can ſay though he change his place, yet will it not be a change of his company. 5. And is not ſomething of this made alſo diſcernible to others, how ſuch oft have come forth with their face as it were ſhining, and a viſible appearance upon them of ſome near approach they have then had to the inviſible God, and another World, that may ſhew where they have been, and that the cauſe muſt be certain, when the effects thereof are ſo real. 6. It is known what high degrees of a triumphant joy even here are reached by the Saints in following the Lord, and upon ſome ſpecial venture for him in doing or ſuffering, which is as it is then found upon their Soul to be a joy unſpeakable, it may clearly ſhow there is more of Heaven in real poſſeſſion than moſt do believe, though theſe get not leave to dwell and have a ſetled abode in this hight, but muſt come down to ſwatter in the depths, and have their weeping hours over ſins, and the prevalence of their own corruption. 7. Is it not both ſeen and felt in the Ordinances what a brightneſs ſometimes is therewith on the Soul, and how piercing a ſound may be audibly heard there

there beyond words, with that ineffably ſweet and fragrant ſavour of his name, as oyntment poured forth, which to a Spiritual eye can bring ſuch an evidence of the truth of a Heaven, as men can have of the being of the Sun, though under a cloud, by ſome rayes and beams breaking out thence, or by the firſt breakings up of the morning that it is ſure there muſt be a greater light to follow. 8. Are not theſe times oft here with a Chriſtian, when no cloud is betwixt Heaven and their Soul; but ſuch a clear sky and brightneſs of Gods face, with the ſenſible intimation of pardon, than which no audible voice from without could be more certainly heard, and then is the Conſcience found to acquit when men were ready to condemn. 9. What does the ſtrong actings of love and deſire in the Soul of a Chriſtian witneſs? is it not to ſhew that native tendency theſe have to their original, and how they have not forgot the way home, for it is ſure that nothing which is come from above, can take up its reſt here. 10. This cannot be poſſibly hid what marvelous tranſports of joy and delight have been oft witneſſed by ſome of the Saints, in their moſt extream ſufferings

ferings for the the truth, who had life and ſenſe, and were fleſh and blood as well as others; that except men ſhut their eyes it might be eaſie to diſcern, theſe had got a ſight which could look them out of trouble and pain, and cauſe them rejoyce when there body was burning, and that it is ſure more of an actual poſſeſſion of heaven, and ſome foretaſte of the glory there, is thus found under the ſaddeſt lot of a Chriſtian, than was ever known, or conceived by ſuch as are at a diſtance. 11. How diſcernible may this be, even to the aſtoniſhment of by-ſtanders, that ſome of the Saints dying on their bed have got up then to the ſight-hill of Heaven, ſo as all might perceive their Soul raiſed, when their body was moſt remarkably pulled down, and ſo far the vail drawn by, that it might be clear ſuch with the opening of their priſon-door, had a light beyond it, and ſaw that which no words could expreſs. Oh if on-lookers knew or could conceive what by the eyes of ſome of the dying Saints is then ſeen, it would make them long more to follow on. But this I muſt ſay it is a loſs to the Church, that ſome of ſuch great and extraordinary glances given from the Lord at theſe times, and con-

convincingly then witneſſed have not been more ſeriouſly regarded; now as a further witneſs to this I muſt add what the world cannot but know, how uſual it is for ſore wreſtlings, and bitter complaints to go before ſuch a bright Sun-ſhine to ſhew here can be no counterfeit.

I am the more preſſed to touch this Subject, it is ſo ſtrange, the deep impreſſions of a *Heaven*, and being for ever with God, are ſo rare now on mens Souls, when even upon the earth ſo ſenſible and near a correſpondence might be had therewith. Oh is our life in ſuch a continued throng, that there is no room, no time to be found with the hurry of other things, for Chriſtians thus alone with themſelves to be at work, and preſs on their own heart, not only theſe great and marvelous diſcoveries of that glory to come, which are ſo clear and expreſs in the word, but what near and demonſtrative evidences even to our ſenſes may be found here of the certainty thereof, if ſome deep reflections were on theſe things. 1. What can be more as a Seal in our hand to quiet the Soul about theſe great aſſurances of heaven we have in the Scripture; than that continued witneſs before us of the certainty, and taking

place

place of this bleſſed record, in all that concerns the Church or any of the Saints within time? yea, how clear it is, nothing hath failed hitherto of its truth, in the ſtrangeſt things thereof, which ſeemed moſt contradicting to ſenſe and reaſon. 2. It is ſure, none knows the truth of holineſs, whoſe alone witneſs to this is from without, and ſuch they can only read in the Bible; but there is a *knowing within themſelves*, and ſuch a hid demonſtration of the being and certainty of heaven to be found upon their Soul; that though nothing is more clear, and really felt, yet can none poſſibly impart what it is to others; nor could it be believed at a diſtance, or once enter into mens thoughts, what a ſight ſome have here with theſe diſcoveries of the new name and white ſtone, even in the way of the word and promiſe, of that glorious ſtate which is above. 3. What a ſenſible converſe may theſe have with the truth and certainty of heaven, who know the real *being of ſpiritual things*? And as ſure it is, the Soul hath its ſenſes as well as the body, not only to diſcern, but really partake of theſe enjoyments and delights, that can have no riſe, nor in the leaſt be influ-

enced from any outward things; ſo thus a peculiar ſweetneſs and delight, and moſt ſenſible pleaſure is there oft found in things moſt bitter and grievous to the fleſh, as clearly ſhews that undoubted correſpondence which is here with a higher ſtate and inviſible world, and how marvelous a ſuiting there is of theſe objects to a ſpiritual life and being; ſince it is ſure the fountain-cauſe and ſpring-head muſt be real, whence an unſpeakable joy is oft in ſo immediate a way let forth on the Soul, when moſt ſeparate and abſtract from the body; and nothing of an outward cauſe for it; Is not this demonſtrative of ſuch a joy to be here found, and it's being no dream, which the Scripture calls *full of glory*. 4. Hath not each Chriſtian to witneſs even to his ſenſes, the truth of another world, and that bleſſed ſtate above; a known and real tendency of grace in the Soul to be ſtill upward, after more near approaches to Jeſus Chriſt, and a higher ſtate than is here, which with as native a motion is found as the fire can move up to its proper place; yea, how ſenſible an interpoſition the fleſh ſtill cauſeth betwixt him and ſuch glorious objects. So that Heaven and this

Earth

Earth he cannot but ſee to be as two oppoſite points, like the North and South Pole, as the one goes up, ſo far does the other go down; as the one comes in ſight and account, ſo far is the other out of ſight and eſtimation; and thus an higher aſcent of the Soul in more ſpirituality and abſtractneſs from things ſeen, is as on leaving the ſhore, who the further he goes into the deep the land is leſs diſcerned. 4. It is ſure ſuch as know the truth of holineſs cannot but ſee, what an advance each ſtep of its further growth hath in a real aſſimilation and likeneſs to ſome higher ſtate than is here; and that it is no ſhadow, but a drawing intereſt, and power, muſt be there, which can cauſe ſuch ſtrong emotions of love and deſire to an unſeen world; yea, that the body is as a priſon to the Soul, by its longings, and looking out to another place, whilſt love hath taken ſo much of it already away, as can go, in this preſent condition, becauſe mortality cannot enter immortality. 5. And is it not ſure, and obvious to our ſenſes, how real an intercourſe and paſſage is here betwixt the Soul of a Chriſtian and an inviſible world, whither the continued haunts and reſort of ſuch do ſo much lye, where they drive

ſo bleſſed a Trade, and have moſt certain returns? It was not ſtrange, that *Jacob's* heart ſhould fail, the thing was ſo far above his faith, of *Joſeph's* being truly alive; but when ſo viſible a confirmation by the ſight of the Chariots and Wagons was further given, though his wondering ceaſed not, yet did it cauſe his ſpirit revive.

*Sect.* 14. It is ſure alſo, the world cannot but ſee *there is a Hell*, which lyeth not ſo hid in the threatnings of the word, but is in ſome degree both felt and viſibly witneſſed here, and ſo far a begun poſſeſſion of its horror and torment, that the greateſt Atheiſts may know it is a matter of earneſt, and no night-dream, if they did not hide themſelves from ſuch a ſight; Now for this ſome undeniable evidences, even to mens ſenſe, of its reality, I offer, in a time when by moſt of this generation it ſeems to be looked on as a diſputable thing, and in ſo ordinary a way paſſed; yea amongſt the beſt theſe are ſo rare, who are found to work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling. 1. Is not this viſible, and in ſome degree begun here in theſe everlaſting ſtings and ſcorch-

ſcorching flames which are there, by that horror of conſcience and inſufferable torment known in the caſe of many, as that of *Spira*, *Latomus*, yea with moſt remarkable inſtances of this kind in every age, where the world might ſee the truth of a *hell* drawn as in a picture before their eyes, and how certainly this is begun not only in the pain of loſs, but in the very pain of ſenſe; ſo as even here ſome of the ſcrieches of the damned there, can be no hid or unknown thing to the world. 2. Is not hell and the truth of that horrid eſtate brought near mens eyes by theſe ſtrange effects which ſome begun degrees thereof could only cauſe, ſuch as to blaſpheme and rage againſt God, becauſe of his plagues, a fury and violence againſt the truth beyond the ordinary rate of mens natural enmity thereat, with that impetuous preſſure and incitement, which may be ſeen thereto; yea, hath not *Cains* cry been heard from many, *my puniſhment is heavier than I can bear*; ſuch a ſudden breaking up of the conſcience, where nothing but ſtupidity was before, that hath made ſome ſeek to be rid of themſelves; as a deſperate eſſay to be rid of this, and others plung themſelves in ſenſuality to deaden

the ſenſe of their pain and torment, by getting more near to the condition of beaſts. 3. Can it be hid from the world, or the moſt ordinary obſervers, what is ſo frequently obvious, how there is a coming within ſight of hell, by ſome here upon the near approach of death, that like the hand-writing on the wall to *Belſhazzar* cauſeth a terror and trembling ſenſe on them, beyond what they could have from a preſent diſſolution of nature. 4. Is there not ſomething of that faith the fallen Angels have in hell, whoſe torment is to believe, and yet are conſtrained with terror thereto, viſibly witneſſed here? whereby many thus are haunted whether they will or no with the dread of God, who hate him, and their torment is from too great an evidence of the truth. 5. Can it be hid, how many of this generation, are ſo viſibly transformed into the image of the Devil, and turned as it were into the ſame kind, with theſe deſperate ſpirits, that humane nature, though corrupt, would even dread at ſome acts of wickedneſs, and oppoſition to God, theſe are found to take pleaſure in. 6. And is not that aſſociation which is in hell with the Devil and his Angels actually begun here, in ſo immediate

diate a converſe with them, and explicite engaging in their ſervice, by many who for this end, renounce the very name and profeſſion of being Chriſtians, which the world cannot poſſibly deny? yea for this cauſe I may ſay even theſe horrid wretches ſerve, and are a moſt confirming ſight before us to the truth, to let men know hell is no fable, when ſuch are found in the earth, and dwell among us, whoſe continued trade and intercourſe is with theſe powers of darkneſs. 7. It is known to be no dream or ſhadow, what frequent apparitions there are of the inhabitants of that place, theſe wicked ſpirits, and how much they haunt the world whoſe continued work is to incite men to wickedneſs, and oppoſe the Kingdom of Chriſt, that it is ſtrange how little we are affected therewith, and ſhould not thence have ſome deeper reflexion on the being and certainty of a hell. 8. So far is that after-ſtate made viſible here, by a delivering many up to ſuch aſtoniſhing obduration of mind, that to the conviction of all, they may be ſeen bound over in the priſon, and kept under chains, ſo as they cannot ſtir until death come to bring them to the rack; this is no rare ſight in the world, yet ſuch a

*preludium* of hell, and ſo near a ſtep to it, that it may be clearly ſeen, ſuch a ſentence from the great judg, *depart from me*, is even here paſt, and made effectual, how they are put in the executioners hand, ſhut out from means of their help, the Scripture bound up and ſealed, from having any more acceſs to their Soul; and thus no more to do, but to be carried from the Gaol to the final ſtroke. 9. There is a map and ſhadow of that eternal puniſhment the world may alſo ſee in ſome terrible acts of divine judgment within time, ſuch as have been publickly known, and a viſible hand from heaven therein on perſecutors of the truth, apoſtates, blaſphemers.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

SOme great events of the holy Scripture, are held forth in the preceeding chapter, to witneſs, what a Seal this day is in our ſight, to the truth and faithfulneſs of God there; and hath in the darkeſt times of the Church been remarkably continued before her, which I am ſure were they rightly looked on and brought near our thoughts, might be more demonſtrative of God, and the exceeding greatneſs of his power, then any extraordinary ſigns or miracles could be. I ſhall but touch three inſtances further, with ſome peculiar reſpect to theſe laſt times; which as they are clear and undeniable before us; they convincingly witneſs alſo of what ſingular uſe ſome of the moſt dark, and aſtoniſhing depths of Providence about the Church in this preſent day are to confirm, and ſeal the Scripture.

*Sect.* 1. Firſt we ſee a ſtroke *of Judicial induration, and blindneſs of mind upon the Jews to this day continued*, after ſo great a light, and brightneſs of the Goſpel; and when all poſſible grounds, and

props,

props, they formerly leaned on are to their own conviction now made void, which is indeed one of the ſtrange wonders under the *New-Teſtament* we have before us; but was not this foretold? and by the holy Ghoſt ſhewed to the Church, what we ſee, with the very firſt dawning of the Goſpel. *Rom.* 11. 8. 12. 25. 2 *Cor.* 3. 14. And how ſuch a myſtery ſhould be underſtood, yea, the long continuance of that ſtroke made ſo clear, as to make it a further confirmation of the truth, ſince it is ſure that *blindneſs upon Iſrael* is concluded there, under a judicial arreſt, until the *fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in*; now if this were not before us in the *Bible*, could we poſſibly know or comprehend ſuch a thing, what ſo viſible a withholding the very exerciſe of mens reaſon can mean, that they ſee not the light in the noon-day: But here is a darkneſs, for our further enlightning, and a ſtroke on them which might be of greateſt uſe to ſtrengthen us more in the truth, when that ſo ſtrange a vail is ſtill over their mind that they cannot ſee.

1. How the *Old-Teſtament* is the very foundation of Chriſtianity, and that there the

the Goſpel, the greateſt ſecret, which from the boſom of the Father was ever revealed to men doth conſpicuouſly ſhine forth; whoſe brightneſs now under the *New-Teſtament*, though it hath a greater light, yet is it no new light: for to him do *Moſes* and the Prophets bear witneſs, ſo that you cannot cite a more clear teſtimony from any of the Evangeliſts to the *Meſſiahs* ſufferings, and the Churches being redeemed that way than you may have, *Iſa.* 53. *Dan.* 4. *Jer.* 23. 5, 6. *Pſal.* 22. 18.

2. Can men have their eyes open, and not ſee, that the whole ſcheme, and *œconomie* of the Jewiſh ſervice, is a moſt clear ſhadow, and Idea of the Goſpel, and how that dark body of their ceremonies and Types, have thence only their light; for who could look on the Ark, the Mercy-ſeat, their Paſſover, Scapegoat, *&c.* and not diſcern ſome Divine myſtery thus ſhadowed forth? That ſurely the blood of atonement, their ſin-offerings, and ſacrifices, were not the true victime offered to God, but had a figurative relation to ſome other propitiatory ſacrifice on whom the ſins of men were actually laid.

3. What

3. What poſſibly can be more clear than this? That in the Goſpel as the center all theſe ſhadows did meet, which do now ceaſe, their full end, and accompliſhment being come; and if men look on that pattern, and frame of the Jewiſh ſervice, can they ſee it, and not know the building it ſelf by it? And how exact a correſpondence is thus betwixt them, that in ſo ſtrange a multiplication of theſe Figures, and Types, which were then of Divine appointment; nothing is there inept, or uſeleſs, but had a peculiar uſe, and relation to ſomething in the Goſpel; that as face anſwereth to face in the glaſs, one may ſee there is the ſhadow, and lo here the ſubſtance, where all is found, and that their light is now gone and extinguiſhed, becauſe the Sun it ſelf is riſen.

4. Men could hardly believe, if they did not ſee this with their eyes, with what veneration the Jews can admit the *Old Teſtament*, and yet deny the *Meſſiah* to be come. They know it is many ages paſt, ſince their fathers looked for him, and with greater expectations were awaked to ſuch a hope, near theſe times of the Goſpel than they now are. They know

know *Daniels* Seventy weeks is a piece of canonical Scripture, which clearly takes in his coming, and though it were taken either for weeks of days, or of years, it muſt be long ſince expired, but if they ſhould mean weeks of ages, then for many thouſand years his coming could not be yet expected. How ſtrange a vail muſt this be on their mind? which may be no leſs obvious, than that they cover themſelves with, at the reading of the Law.

But what a witneſs is here alſo to the truth, to ſilence Atheiſm about the Divinity of the Scripture, if it were brought near our thoughts, that ſuch a nation, and race there is, and kept up to this day as a living witneſs to let the World ſee. 1. How unanſwerable an evidence this is to their ſenſes of the truth of that renowned Kingdom, and Church of *Iſrael*, to whom the Oracles of God were committed, and once by a ſpecial mark of his favour ſeparated from the Nations, (though now it is turned into a curſe) which to the conviction of all, even of the greateſt Atheiſts, may ſhew it is no impoſture, or Romance, which by the Scripture is held forth; but ſuch a viſible witneſs there

yet

yet is of its truth, as men have of a flouriſhing City, when ſuch ruines are ſeen, as bear the evident marks of its former grandeur. 2. We cannot but ſee ſuch a people kept by themſelves, and not mixed with the Nations, whoſe Fathers from one generation to another did own and imbrace the *Old Teſtament* as the word of God; and which is demonſtratively clear, could not therein be inſtructed by the Chriſtian Church, whom with the greateſt oppoſition and malice they have ſtill purſued, to witneſs there is no poſſible colluſion, can be here. 3. Thus the World may ſee a people that are known enemies to the Chriſtian Faith; who yet confeſs, and own that Doctrine, in which the truth and ſubſtance of Chriſtianity is clearly ſhewed forth, and do fully acknowledg that truth of the *Meſſiah*, to redeem, and deliver the Church, is the undoubted promiſe of God. 4. And is it not ſure ſuch are this day in our ſight, that once were an united and flouriſhing ſtate in their own Land, whoſe ſtroak, and judgment in its manner and continuance being now for 1500 years, is ſuch as no inſtance, preſent or paſt through the World, could ever be found to reſemble; but as a

Beacon

Beacon on a high hill calls aloud to every age and time of the Church, to enquire what means ſuch a ſtrange and amazing ſight as this of the *Jews*.

*Sect.* 2. The Second inſtance I here offer, to ſhew how great a witneſs to the truth, and the glorious being of God is in theſe laſt times before us; is, *that amazing ſtroak of induration on the Romiſh Church*; ſo ſtrange a thing this is, after ſuch clear breaking up of the truth, how men can at once exerciſe reaſon and be Popiſh; yea in the matters of an eternal intereſt, that ſhould lye ſo near, to wreſtle with a light that ſo clearly ſhews, if the Scripture be true they are undone, and for ever ruined. Here is one of the greateſt depths of the judgment of God in the earth; but expreſly foretold, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 11. That ſuch a deluſion muſt be, and *Rev.* 16. 8, 9, 10. What entertainment the light was to meet with from this party, in a blaſpheming, and further rage, inſtead of repenting; and that the darkning of their Kingdom, ſhould make them gnaw their tongue with pain; but not ceaſe to oppoſe themſelves to the cleareſt evidence of the truth. We ſhould have thought it almoſt not poſſible for

for the *Popiſh* intereſt to gain more ground by ſeduction, now after ſuch a ſhining forth of the Goſpel, whatever advantage in former times it had, and in many parts yet hath, by fear and conſtraint; but this needs not be ſtrange, when Atheiſm and ignorance are found ſo effectual to uſher it in, and hath a bait therewith ſo well ſuited to a licentious time: it is eaſie to quite the truth for them who never knew it, or the receiving of it in love: and the World may ſee, that ſuch who fall off to that way, are ingaged this day, not on debate, and from arguments to the judgment. Some particulars I ſhall here inſtance, which are known, and owned by the *Romiſh* Church, and amongſt the moſt concerning articles of their Faith, that all may ſee and conſider, how theſe poſſibly can ſuit with the ſerious exerciſe of reaſon and judgment, and their profeſſed owning the Divinity of the Scripture: if ſuch a judicial ſtroke as is there expreſly foretold, were not thus convincingly verified.

Firſt, That men muſt quite that judgment of diſcerning given them of God, and not truſt their own eyes, but others, in the great intereſt of Salvation; yea, thus

thus with their conſent be ſhut out from all proper knowledg of the Scripture, and ſo far take the Church-guides for the Bible, as on their teſtimony they muſt reſolve their faith, even whilſt they cannot but ſee the greateſt of theſe more ſwayed with the concernments of the earth than of heaven, and none more involved in its affairs than ſuch are; yea, when nothing is more expreſly contrary to the command of God both under the Law, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. and under the Goſpel, *Joh.* 5. 39. what an aſtoniſhing thing is this?

2. Is it not like a ſtroke of madneſs, to own a blind obedience to men amongſt the heights and excellencies of their faith, and account ignorance a part of Religion in ſuch a world where deceit and falſhood are ſo much in faſhion; and thus in their Souls concernments truſt theſe whoſe credit and teſtimony without ſome further ſurety they would fear to take for a ſum of money? Oh! what is this for men to adventure with their eyes ſhut in the great things of heaven and eternity, and yet not be ſtruck with ſome fear and jealouſie, yea when ſo many thouſands, who are known to be rational and ſerious in their way,

do ſolemnly declare what a contradiction the Doctrine of their Church is to the expreſs letter of the Scripture, and therein offers an appeal to their own inquiry and trial if they will credit that bleſſed record, if there it be not clearly found, they are deceived and ruined by their ſpiritual guides. Sure it is, that much leſs ground of ſuſpicion would cauſe ſuch open their eyes to try the beſt ſecurities they have about any outward intereſt.

3. Is it not clear, that no ſuch ſlavery is exerced on the bodies of the greateſt drudges under the *Turks*, as is here on mens Souls, who ſee, and yet may not admit their own ſight of the plainneſs and perſpicuity of this Scripture, nor this record it bears of it ſelf, that it is fitted to make the ſimple wiſe, were it never ſo clear and plain before them, but muſt take it from others on truſt, that the Chriſtian faith held forth in the Scripture, is not there held forth in intelligible words by the holy Ghoſt, but a maſs of dead Characters, without ſenſe, until their Church-guides put a meaning on it; on which they muſt reſolve their faith, though they ſhould ſee it moſt croſs to its plain and

and genuine ſenſe, yea while they are forced to confeſs, if they pretend no extraordinary revelation, that the ſpecial illumination of the Spirit, by which the word is ſavingly underſtood, can from no private Chriſtian be ſhut up, more than the greateſt Doctors of the Church.

4. How amazing a thing is it, to ſee how far men dare venture, where ſcarce a ſhadow or School-problem can be found to take hold on, as to the great foundation of the *Romiſh* Church, and of all that ſtructure of the Primacy and Infallibility of her head, which is an alledged preſidence of *Peter* amongſt the Apoſtles, and ſome humane traditions thereabout; for it is undeniable, this is the whole on which without further enquiry no leſs weight is laid over, than the intereſt and eternal ſaving or periſhing of many millions of Souls, they and their children which are concerned therein; and it is ſure, if this preſidence of *Peter* fall, and have no ſolid ground in Scripture, ſo that it be evinced, the rock on which the Chriſtian Church is built is Jeſus Chriſt, and not *Peter*; then ruſheth all the building down, with that high power and infallibility of the *Pope*, which muſt fall therewith; and if this fall and be found

a cheat, then all his pardons and absolutions founded on that plenary power on which so innumerable a multitude build their peace, and takes as their acquittance into eternity are gone,and can do no good, yea such ruined and undone who have trusted their Souls thereto; now who is there wouldadventure the smallest outward interest on such a ground, where if men would but come to be in earnest, nothing can be more clear than this from the Scripture,that the power of the keys was given to the rest of the Apostles as well as to *Peter*, *Mat.* 18. 18, 19. And that he did exerce no such presidence amongst them, see *Act.* 15. Nor can the least solid ground be to judg, he was ever at *Rome*, or had the least peculiar tye thereto, beyond the rest of the Apostles.

5. As it is a horrid blasphemy and expresly contrary to the Scripture to join humane tradition with it,and give the same authority thereto,to decide and ground the Churches faith about the truth. It is a strange contradiction to reason for men to suppose or lay weight on the infallibility of Tradition, and clear uninterrupted delivery of the Churches sense on the written word this way, when they cannot but know, what oppo-

oppoſition general Councils have had to others in the greateſt truths, the frequent juſtlings of the fathers together; yea, is it poſſible Tradition could be a ſure conveyance of the Doctrine of the Church, and its ſenſe on the Scripture, when the whole Chriſtian world was almoſt turned *Arrians*, that there ſeemed to be but one *Athanaſius* left, and after that falling off to *Mahumetaniſm*, when ſuch times were that ſtars ſeemed to fall from heaven, and ſo many Churches once famous, ſwallowed up under this black darkneſs; and it is ſure, men cannot but ſee, how far a relation will vary and become unlike it ſelf, in a very ſhort time. Oh! what a ſtrange thing muſt deluſion be, and a judicial blindneſs of the mind?

6. Is not here a thing ſo groſly abſurd, that may tempt men to Atheiſm, and queſtion the certainty of all truth? to hazard an eternal intereſt and ſatisfaction of divine juſtice on ſome plenary indulgence given out of the Churches treaſure, and this from a ſuppoſed over-plus of merit in ſome of the Saints, who had more than enough for themſelves, though ſuch whom they muſt confeſs were ſinners when they were upon the earth, nor can deny that the Scripture ſheweth, by one ſacri-

fice is the redemption of the elect Church for ever made perfect. I confeſs, if it were a matter of ſmall moment, and ſome outward hazard only, men might ſport at ſo notable an impoſture; but oh! in a buſineſs of eternal ſalvation and condemnation, how ſad and deplorable a ſight is this?

7. But admitting ſuch ſtrange principles they own, can they poſſibly ſhun ſuch a diſcovery, at what an uncertainty their Souls are thus ventured, or how any can be ſecure, 1. If ſuch merits they lean on were indeed more than their own need, whoſe they are, did require. 2. Though ſuch an over-plus were a truth, can they be ſure, in whoſe hand theſe were intruſted to diſpence, or what is their proper right or warrant to apply them, when for this from the Scripture there is no ſhadow, and from them the world cannot poſſibly know. 3. How are they ſure, but by a long continued application, in ſo many thouſand plenary Indulgences founded thereon, they may be already exhauſted, and loſt their wonted ſtrength; but oh! an anſwer to all theſe aſtoniſhing things is too evident, that a judicial ſtroke from the Lord is ſuch that no reaſon is able to cure.

8. This may be the more wonderful, when

when it is ſo clear, except men will ſhut their own eyes, that here is a lucrative intereſt, money for merit, as the procuring cauſe, for want of which the poor and friendleſs muſt periſh; and thus the high-way-robber, if he can ſave his neck, is ſure to have his Soul ſafe, by giving ſome part of the purſe he hath taken to the Prieſt. Thus no abſolute neceſſity for one to be religious and rich at once, who hath enough whereby to purchaſe the merit of others, and how to expiate all guilt, and ſecure his after-hazard by preſent money, and a liberal hand to the Church.

9. How ſad and amazing a ſight is it, to ſee men ſo infatuate in the veneration of the reliques of the Saints, and aſcribe ſuch efficacy thereto, both ſpiritual and for outward diſeaſes; when if they would open their eyes, there is ſuch manifeſt appearance of deceit, that they know they muſt pay for their toil and reſpect to ſuch things to them who viſibly purſue their own gain that way, and can have no aſſurance, but ſuch may be the bones of ſome malefactors, and that it be an impoſture rather than a miracle, how the milk of the Virgin *Mary* 1500 years, and the bones of the Apoſtles ſhould be kept uncorrupted, when the

atteſters thereof all may ſee, have that politick intereſt of money for it, which in every time drives many thouſands not to deceive others only, but to ruin their own ſouls.

10. How ſtrange a contradiction is here for men to admit the morality of the firſt and ſecond Command, as the law of their God, and its being perpetually binding, which ſo expreſly ſays, *Thou ſhalt not bow down, nor worſhip the likeneſs of any thing*, &c. and yet both authoritatively determine and practiſe the contrary. It is ſure there, all adoration of the inviſible God, under a viſible repreſentation is moſt plainly forbidden; and that *Aarons* Calf, and theſe at *Dan* and *Bethel*, though the worſhip thereof was intended for the true God, yet by him was found Idolatry. But what ſubtilty of diſtinctions, or of that reſpect pretended therein to the prototype can make ones pillow ſoft on their death-bed, when they muſt inſtantly paſs in before his Tribunal, whoſe law they have thus uſed.

11. As it is clearly repugnant to the Scripture, how ſtrange a contradiction to reaſon is here? That there ſhould be a tranſubſtantiating of the bread and

wine

wine in the Sacrament into the real body and blood of Jeſus Chriſt; when 1. It can be no more a Sacrament, when turned into the thing ſignified. 2. Can the accidents, ſuch as colour, taſte, ſmell, poſſibly remain and exiſt without the ſubject. 3. Can one and the ſame numerical body, which is finite, be in the ſame moment of time in many thouſand places through the earth, remotely diſtant from other; yea thus can there be a penetration of bodies, when all muſt confeſs, the nature of bodily ſubſtances is to be impenetrable. How ſad a ſight is it, for ſo many to reſign the liberty of their Souls ſo far to others, that they muſt quit both ſenſe and reaſon at once, and may not ſearch the Scripture to know what is held forth there.

12. Can it be ſuppoſed, ſuch are in earneſt, if there be not a judicial ſtroke on their judgment, to pray to one dead man, in the behalf of another? to theſe who cannot hear, for them who are paſt help? yea, that men ſhould be ſo far without fear and feeling, as to reckon a liberty to deſtroy themſelves ſome ſpecial advantage, and that a diſpenſation from the Pope for violating the expreſs Law and command of God, will be enough to ſtand betwixt

twixt them and his avenging juſtice.

I ſhall further add but this one inſtance here (having ſome occaſion to give a more full account of their Doctrine in the cloſe of this Treatiſe) how ſtrange and amazing a thing is it, for men to plead, yea ground their faith ſo much on an uninterrupted ſucceſſion in their Church; when yet they expreſly hold a nullity both of Baptiſm and Ordination, if the intention of the Prieſt ſtand not right thereto; and that this is eſſentially neceſſary for it; for thus how ſhall the world know, but moſt of their Popes and Clergy be both without Baptiſm, and ſtill Laicks without Ordination; and ſo no poſſible acceſs for the Church to know either the certainty of Succeſſion, or Infallibility of a Judg.

Theſe few particulars I have only inſtanced of the Doctrine, and known tenets of the *Romiſh* Church, to witneſs how convincing a ſeal this is to the Scripture, in ſo ſtrong a deluſion, theſe are viſibly given up to, for which I do appeal their Conſcience, and that confeſſion themſelves make to the world, if any thing contrary to theſe principles they publickly own and admit be here charged upon them. It is is a ſight I confeſs ſhould be ſad, to ſee

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ſo great a darkening of the truth, and ſo much of the Chriſtian world periſh, and will not once open their eyes; but it is well, ſuch a clear diſcovery is here alſo, which on another account calls to rejoyce, and be more ſtrengthened in the way of the Lord, that we know ſuch a party is this day in the earth, and before us, whoſe being, appearance, and theſe advantages they now boaſt of are ſo undeniable a witneſs to the truth, if we conſider theſe things. 1. There is ſuch a piece of the Scripture, that fore-tells the Man of Sin, the manner of his approach, with the whole deſtiny of his reign and fall, which muſt needs take place, and have an application to ſome particular party, except we quit all certainty of Divine truth, for if one line, or one ſyllable of this ſhould fail, we were done, and our ſecurity in the greateſt intereſt broken, ſince the faithfulneſs of God ſtands good for every part of his word as well as the whole. 2. It is clear, this picture was drawn by the Holy Ghoſt, of ſuch an adverſary, now a Thouſand five hundred years paſt, what ſhould be his form, and ſhape, the way of his appearance, with his true proportion and lineaments. 3. Except we deny

deny our ſenſes, it is certain, that ſuch we ſee with our eyes, as are there ſhewed forth, ſo as none ever knew more clearly the face of a man, by ſeeing his picture exquiſitely done, and to the life, in a frame, then the Church this day may know the Antichriſt, and find him out. I ſuppoſe one in ſome remote part of the earth were brought to underſtand the Scriptures, and in his enquiry there, were aſtoniſhed with theſe diſcoveries he finds of ſo ſtrange an adverſary, with an earneſt deſire to know if he hath been yet made known to the world, let him have a true and particular account of the *Romiſh* Church in its complex frame and ſtate, in its duration, the way of their rule, and in how different a mould it is caſt from all the Kingdoms of the world, his own eyes and reaſon, though nothing from others were told, might ſhew how clear and exact a reſemblance is to be found there to that map, and diſcovery, which with amazement he had before ſeen, and read in the Bible. 4. Is it not to admiration now obvious, how many ages paſt, theſe were fore-told about this adverſary, as they are this day before us in the event, when not the leaſt ſhadow or appearance of ſuch future emergences was

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to be ſeen, or could have entred into mens thoughts, to ſhew this, only from the Holy Ghoſt could have been revealed to the Church, to whom all his works are known from the beginning. 5. Where were we if ſuch a ſight were not this day, as the *Romiſh* Church, what now it is, and in former ages hath been, and how ſore a daſh and cruſhing ſhould it be to the Faith of the Saints, to cauſe a queſtioning of the whole Scripture, when ſuch concerning Propheſies that reſpect moſt of the times of the New Teſtament have no being in the event, nor now poſſibly could have; for according to the word it is clear, this great adverſary in his riſe muſt begin with the very firſt times of the Church under the New Teſtament, and his continuance ſuch, that the laſt ſtroke, and his being utterly aboliſhed is to be one of the neareſt preſages of the ſecond coming of the Lord.

*Sect.* 3. There is one great event of the Scripture I ſhall further add, which in ſo dark a day might preſs a more ſerious enquiry and obſervation thereof, to ſee how this anſwers the promiſe, when ſo obvious and ſenſible a contradiction

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ſeems none to it; *that a more flouriſhing ſtate of the Church ſhould be in theſe laſt times on the ruines, and down-fall of Anti-chriſts Kingdom, which cannot go back under all theſe aſſaults and oppoſitions of men, but is ſuch that the one intereſt muſt advance, and the other further decline.* This is a truth we know the Lord hath enſured by his faithfulneſs, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 8. *Rev.* 17.13. and *chap.* 16, compared with 20. 1, 2, 3, 4. which does ſo evidently contemporate therewith; to which alſo many Propheſies that concern the ſtate of the Church in the latter days bear a moſt clear witneſs; that the moſt eminent appearances of God, the greateſt enlargement, and of the longeſt continuance, that his Church ſhould have under the New Teſtament to meet in ſuch a period of time, and then ſhould her Spring begin, after a long and ſharp winter, that went before; it is clear alſo, that the time of the Promiſe is certainly come, which cauſeth great thoughts of heart unto many, whilſt ſo much from preſent ſenſe ſeems to ſpeak a viſible contradiction thereto; for it cannot be denied, that the Lords work about the Reformed Church looks now every-where to be a work of judgment, we ſee ſearching trials, ſome a-

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mazing depths, and intricacies of Providence, how ſtrange a meeting there is this day of contrary tydes, that ſeem to drive moſt back, and on every hand to bring in difficulties, yea ſuch a preſent darkneſs and faint almoſt on all, as former times of the Church did not know; but to witneſs the certainty of the Promiſe, that the world may ſee the God of the Reformed Church doth ſtill own that intereſt, and this his word, who is faithful and true, yea that nothing is here; but what may ſtrengthen more than ſhake; theſe things I offer to be ſeriouſly conſidered.

Firſt, when ſuch a preſent darkneſs is, is it not known alſo? how bright a day did go before this, and what an immediate appearances of God by moſt ſtupendious providences then was to reſcue his truth, and people from the power of Antichriſt, ſo that though our night ſhould be more dark, none can queſtion ſuch a ſeal, which before the Sun, to the amazement, and conviction of the world, with ſo full a witneſs and aſſurance on the ſpirits of his people, yea I muſt ſay with extraordinary ſigns and confirmations from himſelf, he hath put to the cauſe of the Reformed Church.

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2. It is known in every ſtep of the Churches riſing, that whatever inſtruments in an ordinary way could promiſe, yet ſomething far above this both in their calling forth, and excitement, and actings hath been clearly witneſſed, to ſhew that immediate holding from Heaven, and by an extraordinary divine power, for verifying of the promiſe the reformed Church hath of her poſſeſſion and intereſt?

3. Is it not eaſie this day to ſee ſo ſad and diſmal an hour now upon the Church is not more obvious than the provoking cauſe, and the righteouſneſs of God no leſs clear therein than the cloud is dark, for I muſt ſay, theſe many years paſt who could have their eyes about them, and not fear upon ſo viſible a departure from the truth, and falling off from love, tenderneſs, and the power of religion, through all the reformed Churches, but that either the Scripture ſhould fail, and want its accompliſhment, or ſome remarkable ſtroke was near; yea that a ſharp cure the Church muſt have, or elſe be undone, and the judgment of God be an help, when all other means have proved ſo ineffectual; and ſhould it not be a ſtrengthening remark in ſuch a day, that the Churches zeal and ſtraightneſs, and her

her Sun-ſhine have been ſeen to riſe and ſet together.

4. Amidſt theſe ſtrange diſappointments of the times, and viſible breaking of humane props, it is known alſo, how carnally the weapons of our warfare have been managed? how fond upon the grandeur of a civil ſtate, and the ſhadow and friendſhip of great men, as though the Spirit of the Lord had not done more than all humane might or power to put the Churches on their feet? Thus have we gone out of the way of our ſtrength, and founded our confidence on grounds of ſenſe, and forgot theſe great appearances of God in times of greateſt weakneſs, where there was much truſting, and little ſenſe; and it may be too clearly ſeen, how few amongſt the throng of profeſſed Proteſtants know what it is to have the Bible for the ſecurity of the Proteſtant Intereſt, and thus quiet their ſoul, though all the foundations ſeem to ſhake, becauſe they know the Cauſe is certainly God's, and he is faithful who hath promiſed.

5. It is moſt diſcernible, that as no outward advantage put in the Churches hand, but hath ſtill ſome further weight laid thereon than it could bear; ſo have

we ſeen ſuch a dependance make the moſt promiſing-means to miſcarry. Oh! for many years have not our eyes been ſhut, to diſcern how far our ſtrength hath departed, by ſo large a reckoning upon viſible props, the ſupport and countenance of Princes, while we forgot the guide of our youth, and the Covenant of our God, that for this hath the Churches hair been cut, and expoſed to their contempt, who ſometimes were forced to look upon her with fear and wondering, when God was known in her Palaces for a refuge. It is ſure carnal confidence hath a curſe waiting on it in the Bible, *Jer.* 17.8, and where the Lord hath curſed, none can make it thrive.

6. Yet under ſo ſad a diſcovery, and whatever as to publick appearances may be ſeen of the Lords departure, it is ſure there hath been no ſuch time that a man can ſay, his uprightneſs and love to the truth fails him, or ceaſeth to have inward joy and peace following it, and that in any ſecret corner, where integrity and ſtaightneſs is found, there wants a witneſs of Gods taking pleaſure therein. No, e're this fail, the ſhadow muſt ceaſe to follow the body. It is indeed an hour of deſertion; but ſuch as lets us ſee our ſin, but give no daſh to

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our duty. It is a witneſs for God againſt mens indifference, remiſsneſs, and carnal boaſting in following the truth, but in it ſelf a viſible confirmation thereof, and thus doth the Church more help than hurt.

7. We ſee this clear, that under the new Teſtament, the whole militant Church as well as particular Churches, hath her remarkable periods, as of tranquillity ſo of trouble, and demoliſhing, when ſack-cloth is every where ſhaped out for her; yea I muſt ſay it is not croſs to the Word, but may be further confirming thereto; that in ſo far as there is no through-reformation, and ſome Antichriſtian mixture found amongſt the Reformed Churches; in ſo far theſe alſo ſhould get ſome touch of the judgment (though to heal, and not to ruin) that comes along with the pouring out of the viols on the Throne of the Beaſt.

8. So ſore a deſertion is found not only to ſuit the times of the Goſpel, but the beſt times thereof, and to a riſing day of the Church, for this in the way and method of Providence is moſt clear, that no great piece of the Lords work for his truth and people hath been ever brought forth, but with ſore wreſtlings, and is ſeen

to ſtay long in the birth, the moſt remarkable mercies have been firſt loſt, and made hopeleſs before they were found, yea no obſervable brightneſs but by ſome dark hour hath been uſhered in, for which there needs no particular inſtances as in *Egypt*, and in *Mordecay's* time, ſince the whole Scripture doth witneſs this.

9. We have this day ſeen nothing but what might have been looked for, that the trials of the Church ſhould be ſuited to her light, and keep ſome proportion therewith, and where ſo great a truſt, and talent hath been given, ſuch ſearching times muſt come about, to ſeek in its return, and improvement, for this anſwers to the way of the Lord and his Word; nor is it ſtrange to ſee a peoples ſtroke and trouble ſuited to that degree of their former exaltation. See *Luk.* 12. 48. What ſharp and perplexing times are there after ſo large a meaſure of light held forth, nor is it ſtrange, theſe things fall in with our day, which did not meet the Reformed Churches at their breaking up, who had not our diſcoveries of the truth with ſo long, and bright ſhining forth of the light.

10. This ſhould not be ſtrange, when the

the faith of the Saints hath got great confirmations, that ſearching times then follow, for where nothing is to ſhake and offend, there can be no tried eſtabliſhment. See *Joh.* 16. *Do you now believe*, ſaith our bleſſed Lord to his Diſciples, *the hour is coming, and now is when you ſhall all be ſcattered.* This we find after ſuch pains he had taken to confirm them, yea thus is it ſeen how trials are ſuited to the greatneſs of that work the Lord hath on foot. See *Jer.* 29. 10. there is a time when all things cry, *be in pain* and unuſual wreſtlings before ſome remarkable birth.

11. However preſent appearances look, we know a ſad deſertion, and the Churches real growth, with her gaining ground, can at once ſuit together, whoſe true intereſt without taking a falſe meaſure; none can judg. 1. From outward grandeur, ſince oppreſſion and greateſt weights have been ſtill found to make way for her growth, and for that end was *Pharaoh* raiſed of the Lord, to make the Churches riſing more conſpicuous. 2. Not from the neareſt, and immediate events, until the Viſion ſpeak, and bring the whole complex Providence before us. 3. Nor can a true meaſure be taken from the preſent reaping,

ſince a hid growth is oft found, where the ſeed lies long under ground, which the Children may reap, that ſeemed loſt to theſe who went before. 4. Not from a great falling off, ſince the Churches intereſt is oft no leſs promoted this way, and the truth ſealed, than by the bringing in of others. 5. Not from ſad afflicting times, ſince out of the greateſt depths, hath the moſt near and ſenſible approach to God been known, which in the iſſue hath helped more to raiſe than all her troubles could ruin. 6. It is clear alſo, not from the indignation of the Lord gone forth againſt the Church, can we take ſuch a meaſure; ſince her bearing thereof is found a begun ſtep in her relief, and to an open pleading of her cauſe, and bringing her forth to the light, *Mic.* 7. 9. where we ſee though the Church is thus laid on the duſt, yet is her intereſt kept alive in her cauſe, to bring her up with it, when the Lord ſhall declare his being a pleader thereof.

12. Though it now look like the going down of the Sun on moſt of the Reformed Churches, and that therewith we have ſo affrighting a ſight before us, what hath

hath befallen many famous Churches in former times; yet is there ſolid ground, I humbly judg without flattering our ſelves, or any over-ſtretching our hope, to ſee here theſe different periods of time, how ſuch a Sun-ſet, and the utter diſſipation of theſe Churches, did then with a remarkable and ſad *criſis* meet with the entry of that long and diſmal night of Antichriſts reign, his begun riſing, and that breaking in alſo of ſuch a deluge of *Mahometiſm*, which did after follow, yea thus in a time, when having ſinned away their light, the Scripture was to have an accompliſhment in the Lords departure, and that great work of his Judgment then coming on the Chriſtian world: But now we ſee, and certainly know, how this ſtrange and unuſual darkneſs over the Church, in a bleſſed conjunction and *criſis*, does meet with Antichriſts begun fall, and a growing light; and upon the Churches riſe, when the intereſt of the Goſpel now is upon the aſcendant, and when it is ſo clear, what now is under the Mediators hand to be brought forth; which is a farther extent of his viſible Kingdom to build, and not to caſt down, to plant and not to cut

off theſe Churches, in the planting of which as ground gained from Antichriſt, yea in purſuance of a full conqueſt he did ſo eminently appear.

I muſt further add this, though it ſeem to beget a fear, and heſitation with ſome; the ceaſing of ſuch great ſigns and appearances of the Lord, in the behalf of the truth, that were once ſeen, and how to anſwer that queſtion, *Where is the Lord God of our Elijahs*, and his great power, and out-ſtretched arm, by which he ſhewed terrible things for his people, as a return of their prayers. Let us conſider, 1. It is the ſame reproached and darkened cauſe of the Proteſtant Church, which God once viſibly owned, and did bear witneſs to by great and extraordinary ſignes of his power, ſo that all may ſee it is not the truth, but falling off from it, with which he now quarrels. 2. Such extraordinary evidences we now are not to wait for, when ſo great a breaking up of light, beyond former times, hath been to clear the truth; for this were to tempt the moſt high, who at the firſt dawning of his work, when difficulties ſeemed in an ordinary way inſuperable, did thus appear. 3. Even under

der ſuch a cloud there want not ſome great and immediate confirmations from the Lord, and a viſible witneſs from him to the cauſe of the Reformed Church, if we had eyes to ſee. 1. That with the ſaddeſt hour, and exigence of the Church, ſome ſtep of Providence hath ſtill been made to appear, and therewith ſo remarkable a breaking forth of light, as it were out of the bowels of ſuch a darkneſs, that the things which threatned moſt hath more fully anſwered the Churches mercy, than any way we could have choſen. No ſuch black cloud hath been, but ſome enlightening Providence, and marvelous witneſs of the Lords condeſcendence we have ſeen as it were ſet over againſt it, yea ſtill ſome new ground of hope made to break up, ſo as to balance with a day of greateſt fears. 2. We cannot but ſee ſince the Lord hath made it ſo clear, that there is ſome hewing of ſtones, and preparing of materials under all this ruin, ſuch as points at ſome great and excellent building, which yet is bringing forward. 3. And hath there not been a diſcernible growth of light, and more clear diſcoveries of the truth, that have gone forth with theſe ruining times.

times. 4. How convincing a reſtraint from the Lord upon mens wrath, to purſue their advantage and power againſt the truth, and its followers, I muſt ſay hath to admiration been witneſſed in this low eſtate of the Reformed Church, and ſuch diverting Providences as have conſtrained their violence to run in another channel. 5. This all may ſee, for their confirming more in the truth, that theſe who in ſuch a day have fallen off to Popery, have had their way viſibly uſhered in by Atheiſm and Ignorance, or the byaſs of ſome outward intereſt, and thus found it eaſie to change their Religion, who never yet in earneſt embraced any, yea to turn Popiſh, e're they knew what it was to be Chriſtians: Now for this I dare appeal the conſcience of the moſt ordinary obſervers. 6. Hath there not been oft cauſe to obſerve how the greateſt eſſays of the adverſary, which ſeemed to ſpeak a preſent ruin, have brought forth the very contrary effects. No ſuch ſtorm on the Church but ſome rent thereby hath been payed to the truth: no preſent loſs, but another way there was found ſome viſible advantage, nor have ſuch ſigns been wanting of the Lords im-

immediate appearance in the darkeſt hour, that may witneſs his peoples gleanings are yet this day better than the full vintage of his adverſaries; and with much ſolid aſſurance it may be further ſaid, whatever former ages have ſeen of the Lords marvelous doings to confirm his truth, and the cauſe of the Reformed Church, in the ſight of the Nations, there are yet greater things to be brought forth; and a rare hiſtory of Providence ſhall be writ, and tranſmitted to the poſterity where theſe two muſt be recorded together, and meet in on witneſs; which is foretold, *Rev.* 15. 3. *Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord; and juſt and true are thy ways.*

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CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

IN proſecution of this Subject, a ſecond particular propoſed, I ſhall here endeavour to clear, which is the *great import of the preceeding demonſtration, how marvelous a light doth thence reſult to the Church*, and what a witneſs is this day of the near approach and condeſcendence of the Lord, to the faith of his people, and a price for wiſdom thus put in their hand, by bringing forth his word, and the certainty of its taking place ſo convincingly before us in the event; which I muſt ſay, were it underſtood, might be of that uſe to make our believing and adventuring on the truth as plain and comfortable a way, and as fully quieting to the Soul, as the way of ſenſe and feeling; but oh how ſtrange is it that whilſt ſuch a thing cannot be hid, yet is ſo little laid to heart, that it ſeems moſt of Chriſtians do not really know what is the eſtate they poſſeſs, but in their converſe with Supernatural truths, are like men half waking, who ſee things before them, yet is it ſo far a dream, that there wants a ſerious reflecting on the great reality of

of ſuch things they ſee. Now to clear what a light breaks thus up to the Church, from theſe diſcoveries of the faithfulneſs of God in his Word, and ſuch wonderful events, wherein it takes place; I offer theſe Twelve *Inferences*.

*Sect.* 1. Firſt we ſee here the eminent verification of this truth, *that unto the Church are committed the Oracles of God*, Rom. 3. 2. How ſo unvaluable, and ſacred a treaſure that by no private conveyance, but by a publick delivery was once put in her hand, is ſtill under truſt depoſited there to be kept; and made uſe of unto the ſecond coming of the Lord. I know this is a truth by few under debate or queſtion, yet how few are there found to believe it, or ſo much in earneſt as to bring it near their thoughts, how ſuch a record is, and ſhould this day be in the world, where as real an intercourſe with Heaven and the Glorious God whoſe Throne is there, is certainly to be had, as if with our eyes we ſhould ſee ſome every hour come thence with their face ſhining, and written tables in their hand of the Counſels of God to his people; now as here is a matter of the

the greateſt concernment that ever was made known to men; in what a tranſport of joy ſhould it put our Soul to know we have no leſs clear and demonſtrative evidence of its certainty by the verification of the Scripture, that ſuch *are the very Oracles of God*, which came down from himſelf, and does, 1. Stand open day and night for giving anſwers to the Church, ſo as none needs fear to come at a wrong hour, or miſs their errand, when they come, if they indeed ſeek counſel there, that they may follow it. 2. Which ſhew forth things to come, and the great revolutions of the world, with their proper circumſtances, when not the ſmalleſt appearance thereof from outwards things could be judged. 3. Which have at all times a certain ſound, and leaves none in the dark, with a doubtful reſponſe; but let the world be what it will unto the righteous, it ſayeth, *Surely it ſhall be well with them*, Iſa. 3. 10, 11. While it hath this audible voice to others, *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked, nor ſhall it be well with them, though their days ſhould be prolonged in the earth*, Eccleſ. 8. 12. 4. Theſe all may ſee, are *the very Oracles of God*, which

which regard not the perſons of men, but with an awful voice do ſpeak to Cities and Kingdoms, and to the greateſt Monarchs there, to the Judg on the Bench, and the man of violence, when his oppreſſion is backed with power, what none elſe dare tell. 5. Which gives anſwers contrary to humane reaſon, and viſible appearances, yet to this day did its ſentence never fail, or deceive the man who truſted thereto. But when the ſuffrage of the Scripture, and of the world are in moſt direct oppoſition to other, it doth not long want a viſible deciſion, whoſe word ſhall ſtand. 6. Theſe who enquire here, will find the way of the Lord ſo far laid open in the darkeſt times, that they may as evidently ſee the *Mind* and demonſtrative cauſes of the ſtrange Judgments that are falling out in the Earth as the certainty of their accompliſhment. 7. And are they not found to be *living Oracles*, as *Act.* 7.38. which do not convey light only, but heat and power to the Soul. 8. It is no report but of undoubted experience, how clear a diſcovery is thence to a Chriſtian, when no-where elſe he could know his way, or underſtand theſe great depths: 1. The depths

depths of Satan, which thus are found out, and made diſcernible for keeping at a diſtance therewith. 2. Theſe depths of Providence which are ſo marvelouſly unvailed, and opened up there when once a Chriſtian gets near theſe Oracles. 3. How thus alſo is there a further enlightening of the Church, and in every time ſome opening up of the deep things of God in his Word, which lay hid there from former ages.

*Sect.* 2. This clear diſcovery is here from our more full perſwaſion of the truth, what marvelous things have a preſent being and exiſtence now before our eyes in the event, which many ages before they were brought forth, we know had a viſible being in the Scripture, and there were revealed and looked after by the Church. This is a truth I muſt ſay, ſo great and convincing, and of that uſe to confirm the faith of the Saints, and be a helper to their joy, that the ordinary impreſſion moſt have thereof, ſhews how little it is either known or ſeriouſly conſidered. 1. That nothing is here conjectural, where a miſtake can be from the events being afar off, and remote from our ſen-

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ſes, but as we know they are written in the Bible, and there only have been revealed; it is as ſure, they are viſible realities in our ſight this day, and for what thereof is not accompliſhed, it may be a further Seal to the truth, when this is ſo clear the time for their taking place is not yet come. 2. Can men open their eyes and not ſee the greateſt Prophecies of the Old Teſtament are at this day fulfilled, except they contradict their ſenſe as well as reaſon; even ſuch as the whole race of the *Jews* atteſt to be a part of the Oracles of God committed to their forefathers, and by them owned, and delivered with a moſt ſevere circumſpection to the leaſt letter or tittle thereof from one age to another? 3. It is undeniable alſo, theſe events are ſuch, that all the Diviners of the world, by the ſtars, or any probable conjunction of natural cauſes, could never reach, or have the leaſt diſcovery of their riſe, to bring them under their prædictions; but any glance they have had was by a light borrowed from the Bible; ſo that the certainty thereof being clear, men cannot but ſee theſe are depths not only above the furtheſt reach of humane un-

derſtanding, but above the reach of fallen Angels, or any depths of the bottomleſs pit to find out ſuch things as the Scripture hath ſhewed; yea let a ſearch be made amongſt the wiſe, and learned of this world, (for which I atteſt the greateſt Atheiſts) if either *Ariſtotle* or *Plato*, or any ſince, who came to the greateſt height of natural knowledg, in all their diſcoveries had ever the leaſt thought or notion of ſuch things as a new Creation, of the power and efficacy of the Goſpel, or that there is a *holy Ghoſt*, and what his witneſſing, comforting, and teaching imports, which yet to the meaneſt of the Saints, are as clear and certain, as that there is day and night.

*Sect.*3. This may be clearly ſeen from the precedeing demonſtration, how the moſt wonderful works of God, and his greateſt appearances in the earth are peculiarly directed to confirm and ſeal the truth of his Word, which *he hath magnified above all his name*; and for this end, to give a being and viſible performance to the Scripture, the moſt glorious actings of the Mediator under the New Teſtament are ſhewed forth, for which cauſe when he

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is going forth to war, in the greatneſs of his ſtrength, with his veſture dipt in blood, he is known by that name, *The Word of God*, *Rev.* 19. 13. Theſe alſo are in every time obvious evictions of this truth; 1. How the moſt extraordinary ſteps in the way of the Lord, which are viſibly above nature, and out of the road of ſecond cauſes; yet go not without the bounds and limits of the Bible, but are ſuch as to the conviction of all, may be eaſie to bring within ſight of that bleſſed record, and a convincing Seal and verification thereof. 2. It is clear alſo, how theſe Providences that are of the greateſt extent and have a further reach than any private uſe, or the perſonal experience of the Saints, yea are ſuch whereby the whole Church hath her publick remarks, and *experimenta lucifera*, are for that end evidently direct, to ſhew the deſtiny and fate of flouriſhing Cities and States, and of the greateſt Monarchs, is no caſual thing, but the viſible product of the Scripture, which there have been foretold. 4. This alſo may be clearly ſeen, how neither *Greece* nor *Rome*, whoſe Conqueſts once were ſpread through moſt of the known world, did ever know ſuch Triumphs as the Truth and Faithfulneſs of

God hath had over the Thrones of Kingdoms, as well as the meaneſt Cottages, which as it makes the Sea keep her bounds, ſo doth it reſtrain the rage of man, yea brings down from their ſeat to an untimely grave ſuch as have made the earth to tremble, and the Nations ſhake in their day; while it may be no leſs marvelous in raiſing the poor from the duſt, to witneſs, there is nothing wherein the Lord doth more conſpicuouſly appear, and ſhew the greatneſs of his power, than in bringing his word to a performance.

*Sect.* 4. Is it not an undeniable and clear *Inference*, from what hath been held forth of theſe great events of the Scripture, That it is ſure this day there is more at our hand, to be convincing and demonſtrative of the truth, if we could advert thereto, than if *an immediate audible voice from heaven were given.* I know if once ſuch an extraordinary ſign from the Lord might be had, men would be ready to think, there needed no more to put them beyond all heſitation and debate; ſuch is the ignorance of many, who know not what they poſſeſs and is already at their hand, when more is really given than mens heart could in this ask,

ask, as the holy Ghoſt does expreſly ſhew, 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19, if the ſence of that Scripture were ſeriouſly pondered, *And this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount*; but to ſhew, that here is more than any ſuch voice now given the Church for her aſſurance of the truth, ſee *v.* 19, *We have a more ſure word of propheſie, unto which you do well to take heed*, &c. wherein is clearly held forth: 1. That ſomething elſe than an ordinary regard to the Scripture is in this required, for a through perſwaſion of its truth; there is a *taking heed*, προσέχοντες, which imports a ſingular attention where the Soul followeth the eye as in an intenſe motion. 2. That thus is there an other ſight to be had of the written Word, and of theſe wonderful things there, which through *not taking heed* moſt paſs by, and do not diſcern. 3. It is moſt clear, how ſuch an advertence and *taking heed* to the Scripture is underſtood here, with ſome peculiar reſpect thereto, as it is a *more ſure word of propheſie*; how it takes place, and hath ſuch demonſtrative evidences of the certainty of its truth in the event; for thus doth the Apoſtle oppoſe it to ſo extraor-

dinary a ſign from heaven. 4. It cannot be poſſibly ſuppoſed, that the word as it is written ſhould be *more ſure*, as to an objective certainty, than his ſpeaking to men by an audible voice, ſince both are his own word. But by ſuch a preference as is here held forth, there is this clearly witneſſed, that in the way of the written word more is really given to the Church, if it were rightly underſtood, and that we could but advert thereto, for begetting a further ſubjective certainty within the Soul, than either miracles or any extraordinary ſign from heaven could do. Now to evince this, how great a light thus may be had, and ſhould break up by *taking heed* to the Word, as it is a *more ſure word of propheſie*, I offer theſe, 1. Is it not clear, from ſo wonderful a product of the Scripture, above nature or natural cauſes, and theſe great appearances of God there which are ſo near, even to our touch and feeling; how convincingly they bring a greater demonſtration of the truth to mens eyes, than ſo extraordinary a voice could bring to their ears. 2. It is ſure, ſuch a diſcovery is in this day to be had of the written word, that in a more diſcernible way than by any outward

voice

voice or ſound may be known by power and life, yea by that ineffable evidence and light, with ſo near and feeling a converſe with the inviſible God, as there is found and experienced by every one of the Saints, that can make it no leſs diſcernible from the word of man, than if we heard it by ſome audible and articulate voice ſpoken out of heaven. 3. What *Jacob* ſaw but in a viſion, may we not here ſee with our eyes, by ſuch a *taking heed*; a *Ladder ſet betwixt heaven and earth*, by which the glorious God his coming down to converſe with the Church and the Souls of his people, is by as near an approach witneſſed in the written word, as if he ſhould come with ſuch a ſtupendious extraordinary voice: ſo that as the top of this ladder, in its deſcent and original is ſeen to reach to heaven; it is ſure, nothing can be more viſible, than how its foot alſo toucheth the earth, and thus its other end is on the ground, to the ſenſe and feeling of the weakeſt Chriſtian, in their experience of the truth. 4. By *taking heed* to the Scripture is not ſuch an evidence and atteſtation to be had of its truth, from a continued *ſeries* of events, and the known certainty thereof, that for our be-

ing ſure and throughly confirmed, doth far exceed any tranſient irradiation of the mind, which ſo ſtrange a voice and ſound from heaven could cauſe? 5. To ſhew the preference of the word to all extraordinary means, we ſee it is the very laſt way and mean now for revealing the counſel of God to the Church; yea how it is ſuited to theſe times, when the greateſt light and moſt clear opening up of the truth is expreſly promiſed, and to be looked after as that which hath the advantage every way of more extraordinary ſigns, whereby in former times the counſels of God were revealed. O if men knew, or would but let themſelves know, what here might be reached by ſuch a ſerious enquiry, and *taking heed* to the Scripture, how eaſie were it to ſee that ſomething much greater than an audible voice from Heaven is this day at their hand, to aſſure them of its truth.

*Sect.* 5. Here we may clearly ſee ſuch a reality and ſubſtance in the ſupernatural truths of the word, that whoever will they may come and *feel after God there*, and with the greateſt certainty of ſenſe be conducted to the things themſelves, which moſt within the

the Church know but in the *theory* and notion. This is indeed a convincing evidence, and ſuch as nothing poſſibly can be beyond it; if we conſider, 1. How the object here is not at a diſtance, but in its approach ſo near, as any thing can be, which is found and touched in mens hands, where they know it is no miſtake, but in the greateſt compoſure of ſpirit, have a preſent and rational reflexion on their own experience. 2. Such as they are ſure it can be no caſual thing, nor is it a groping in the dark; but thus every ſtep in the road of ſenſe and feeling is by rule and method, which hath Scripture-light ſhining before it, ſo that they know by experience, this is nothing elſe but what they were called to believe, and could have read in the Bible before they knew any ſuch thing: for thus are the written Word and the experience of the Saints, found ſuch relatives, and the tye betwixt them ſo diſcernible, as in the moſt obvious connexion that poſſibly could be in nature, betwixt the cauſe and the effect, or the fountain and the ſtream. 3. What here is felt, and proved to be in the way of the Word, we ſee alſo is the repeated experience of others, even of the whole race

of

of the Saints, who in that good and old way of converſe with God, and following him, did in all ages bear the ſame witneſs. 4. That this *feeling* is an undoubted reality, is ſo clear, that theſe now know it who could not believe the truth of ſuch a thing, and did no leſs look thereon as a dream, than moſt of this generation do, until the truth once touched them at the heart. 5. And is it not ſuch a *feeling* that there can be no more ſure converſe by the ſenſes with this viſible world, than that the Saints have with theſe great things revealed in the Bible, when they cannot but witneſs what they have both ſeen and known?

*Sect. 6.* Thus is it clear from the foregoing demonſtration, how *great an aſſiſtance ſenſe offers to the Chriſtians faith*, and what ſolid improvements might be made this way, for a more through reliance on the ſecurity of the Word and Promiſe, when ſo much is given, that men may ſee as well as believe. For which ſome things would be previouſly conſidered, how this is to be underſtood, and what a certainty is here, that we are not graſping at a ſhadow, in a matter of ſuch weight

weight and near concernment to us. 1. It is ſure, there are ſpiritual things, and great ſupernatural truths of the written Word to be known by ſight as well as by faith, whilſt we are here; nor is there any of the Saints but can as firmly abide by their ſpiritual ſenſe, and the reality thereof, as by that which is natural; that the one is no leſs undoubtedly certain than the other. 2. We clearly ſee, how the Lord himſelf makes an appeal to the ſenſe and experience of his people, *Iſa.*40.28. *Haſt thou not heard? haſt thou not known?* and that ſuch a trial is called for, to taſte and ſee if he be not what his word declares him to be, *Pſal.*54.8. where he hath ſo far condeſcended, that none needs take his word on truſt from men, but their own eyes may ſee it. 3. Though it is clear, that ſo much is witneſſed to our reaſon, that no natural ſcience, no propoſition in *Euclide* can have ſuch firm and ſure demonſtrations as the truth of the written Word; yet is it not too obvious, what heſitation and dark apprehenſions are about this, if ſome other ſight and feeling than what by nature or natural reaſon can be had, be not in earneſt ſought after. 4. I confeſs it is one of the excellencies of faith to believe and not

ſee

ſee; yea theſe are moſt bleſſed, for here we muſt *walk by faith, not by ſight*, which is the very firſt and laſt work of a Chriſtian. But I fear a ſad miſtake many are in of the right ſenſe of this, as if to believe were ſome dark and uncomfortable thing, and that the leſs men ſee before them, it were ſo far a higher act of their faith, ſince this only can be underſtood, *quoad evidentiam rei, ſed non quoad evidentiam teſtimonii*; that when no appearances are of the things promiſed, or how ſuch ſhould be, then to credit the word for all, is a giving glory to God, and one of the choiceſt acts of faith within time: But for what concerns the evidence and certainty of the Word, and our ſecurity therein, I muſt ſay, it is ſome higher degree Chriſtians are called to ſeek and look after, that their walking this way may be by ſight, than ſeems to be either thought of, or believed by moſt within the Church; yea ſuch an evidence thereof, that might be truly *phyſical*, and as infallibly ſure, as men can have of the being of the Sun, when they ſee it with their own eyes. 5. Is it not undeniable, that according to the degree of evidence, ſo doth the Soul adventure on the truth, ſo doth it embrace

brace it as good, yea thus only can it have a ſweet repoſe and comfort by a fiducial recumbence thereon? And on this account is it not clear, how it is the want of *ſenſe* that makes ſo great a want of faith amongſt the Saints?

Having premiſed theſe things for giving ſome light to this truth, and to prevent miſtake, I ſhall but in a few words more touch it, ſince what hath been held forth in the preceeding Chapters, bear the ſame witneſs, how great a diſcovery is thus of the Truth, and certainty of the written Word, and what marvelous advantage is at our hand to believe, if we could ſee it aright. But for a further clearing I offer here theſe ſolid improvements of *ſenſe*, that may be convincingly obvious to every diſcerning Chriſtian. 1. How ſuch hath his experience of the Word which he knows well, and hath been ſo oft repeated, that as a lighted Torch does go before him in every new act of his faith, for what is to come, and lets him ſee it is no dark or untrodden path, nor is it a fixing on ſome doubtful and abſtract notion; but that aſſuredly he is on ſafe and known ground here, yea ſuch that as he *knows whom here he hath believed*, and is ſure it is the ſame Word, and the very ſame ſealed Truth and

and ſecurity which he hath often truſted, and had it made good. O what might be found here, to make a Chriſtians way pleaſant and eaſie, if the ſolid improvement of this were but underſtood. 2. Is there not ſuch an aſſiſtance *ſenſe* affords for believing, that it can ſhew how great a part of the Bible is already put in the Chriſtians hand by preſent poſſeſſion; yea thus points him to the very particular Truths, where the day-ſtar hath been made to ariſe within his heart, with ſo ſenſible a breaking up of light, and comfort, and ſtrength, amidſt his ſaddeſt hours, as hath oft put him to ſet a mark thereon, like *Jacobs* erecting his pillar, how there the comforter and his ſoul did meet, when no meeting could have been more ſeaſonable. 3. It is not the object of our Faith only, but we know by ſight how viſible an impreſs of the written Word is on the ſerious and tender walk of the Saints, that as the one is ſo convincingly ſo is the other alſo; yea thus how many impreſſions thereof are in every age ſeen to be caſt off. I am ſure to the conviction of the world. 4. And is it not by *ſenſe* we know the undoubted certainty of theſe truths, which are the greateſt contra-

contradiction to our outward ſenſes, how there is a rejoycing in tribulation, a real abounding under wants, a being ſtrong when we are weak; yea, that an unſpeakable comfort can be really had out of the greateſt depths of a Chriſtians trouble. 5. We know alſo by ſenſe, that as every living thing hath food ſuited to its kind, ſuch a ſubſtance is in the Scripture, and a natural ſuiting of the Truths there, to feed, nouriſh, and ſtrengthen a ſpiritual life, with as great a fitneſs, as our daily bread can be to that which is natural. 6. It is the undoubted witneſs of ſenſe, that there is a power in Godlineſs, as well as the form, and ſuch an evidence, and *demonſtration of the ſpirit*, with the Word, that its ſound can be no more ſure and diſcernible to the ear, than it is to the Soul of a Chriſtian. 7. Except we quit our ſight, as well as reaſon, we muſt ſee ſuch a vital ſcent and air there is with ſerious godlineſs, as no falſe ſhew could ever counterfeit, no more than art can make a dead picture breath and ſtir; yea that the product of the Goſpel, and theſe great effects it hath in the world are indeed above nature, and ſuch as no humane power, or moral influence could poſſibly reach. 8. It is not only

only from the Bible, but with the greateſt certainty of *ſenſe*, that the Saints know, there is an immediate preſence of the Comforter, acceptance and acceſs in prayer, the Spirits making interceſſion in them with ſighs and groans which cannot be uttered, yea ſuch an immediate relief and comfort to the Soul ſo ſenſibly found there, that makes their very bones to bleſs him, and ſay, *who is like unto thee O Lord.* 9. Is it not made obvious to our *ſenſe*, that when once men are engaged in the way of the Lord, they have got ſome new acquaintance, and ſome other Society than men to converſe with; yea what a marvelous change grace then makes on them, from what they were, to aſſure us of that change glory will ere long make on them from what they now are? 10. Can there any thing be more evident, than this to our *ſenſe*, that where grace is in a vigorous exerciſe in any, it gives another appearance than once they had, yea then it doth ſhine with ſuch a luſtre, as will darken all about them? I ſhall but further add, what may be as evident to ſenſe as that there is light and darkneſs, that inbred contrariety which is in moſt of men againſt holineſs, and how thus there are two con-

contrary ſtates here, to witneſs the certainty of theſe contrary ſtates of heaven and hell in another world.

*Sect.* 7. Thus we may ſee, that to theſe who believe is *the exceeding greatneſs of the power of God*, and *his mighty working, moſt eminently ſhewed forth*; yea in the way of the Word, and its continued verification, more than in any extraordinary path. This is the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt, *Eph.* 1. 19; which though ſtrange and amazing, yet nothing more ſure, that there is none of the Saints who is exerciſed unto godlineſs, but may know the truth of undeniable Miracles, and a real converſe therewith, within his ſoul, if a more ſerious reflection were on his own experience, how immediately from Heaven theſe are wrought. I confeſs it may ſeem to bring it under debate, if this can be a truth, or if it be really believed, when it doth not cauſe a more frequent tranſport of joy, and wondering among Chriſtians, thus to know ſuch near and ſenſible communications betwixt God and their ſoul, by the Scripture; and that it is found from him, which under their ſaddeſt preſſures makes their

work eaſie, both in them and about them; yea, how the greateſt effects of a ſupernatural and divine Power that ever was ſhewed to men, ſuch as to raiſe the dead, open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth a Creation out of nothing, are ſurely acted over in the heart of each of the Saints, though ſpiritually, yet in as great a reality there, and with no leſs demonſtrative evidence of Gods immediate Power, as there can be of theſe extraordinary Miracles which were once ſhewed forth to the view and conviction of the world.

*Sect.* 8. We ſee this truth, and how clearly it is witneſſed from what hath been held forth, *That the confirmations of the laſt times are greater than thoſe of the firſt*, and 'tis more eaſie now to believe, and be perſwaded of the certainty of the Scripture, than in the days when ſuch extraordinary ſigns and appearances of God were held forth to his Church. I know this will ſeem ſtrange, and by ſome be queſtioned how it can be a truth, that there ſhould be now more advantage to believe the Word, and we accountable for the improvement

ment of a larger ſeal and witneſs thereto, than in the days of the Apoſtles and primitive Church, before whom ſuch undeniable Miracles were wrought. But let us alſo conſider, 1. What great things of the Scripture have this day taken place, and are diſcloſed in the event; which then were hid from their eyes; and as we have that advantage of all which from the Lord was brought to confirm his truth in theſe times, and may recur thereupon, with the ſame certainty as if we had ſeen them: O what a marvellous ſeal hath been ſince added, which former times did not know. 2. As it is ſure none can deny a greater light hath now broken up to the Church, than what was in former Ages, and ſince the firſt times of the Goſpel, That there hath been a continued finiſhing of the myſterie of God in the Scripture, the performance whereof is the great intent of Providence; ſo is it alſo clear what a further revealing and bringing to light hath been therewith of his deep counſels there, which is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghoſt. 3. Is it not now manifeſt, the time of that Promiſe *Dan.* 12. 4, is come, for ſome greater diſcoveries of theſe truths which then were ſealed up, when they

ſhall not run in vain who are on this bleſſed ſcent, to know what the Word is bringing forth for the Church; yea, that it is ſuch a day when ſome great Scripture-truths are near the height and full period of their accompliſhment, and therewith a more remarkable piece of the work of God than former Ages have known; for which, whatever preſent darkneſs, now we have ſure ground to believe that the *brightneſs of the ſecond coming of the Lord*, 2 Theſ. 2. 8. by which the man of ſin ſhall be utterly aboliſhed, is in ſome meaſure begun, and ſo much thereof ſeen as may be an earneſt in our hand of what we believe and wait for before the end. 4. Such an advantage is this day beyond the beſt of former Ages, that we may ſee what length the courſe of the Goſpel, and of the Church-Militant, is now come; and how far the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled; which if it were not thus verified in the event, how hard ſhould it be to believe a truth ſo contrary to all humane appearances.

*Sect.* 9. Thus it doth manifeſtly appear from the fore-going demonſtration, that theſe *are not more wonderful truths we are now called*

*called to believe*, which ſeem at a diſtance ſo ſtrange and aſtoniſhing; *than ſuch we certainly know, and have ſeen with our eyes accompliſhed*; nor are the objects of our Faith, that the Scripture is yet to bring forth, more great, and above Natures underſtanding, than theſe which are the objects of ſenſe, and thus before us in the event; if we could ſeriouſly conſider, 1. What concerns the Jewiſh Reſtauration; a Truth that ſeems ſo hard for many to believe how this ſhould take place, for that dead Womb yet to bear, and theſe dry bones live which for ſo many days have lain at the graves mouth, is indeed a marvellous thing! But what do we ſee? and is accompliſhed about that people? Is it not alſo demonſtrative of God, and of his marvellous power in the way of Judgment, as this is of the Soveraignty of his Grace? I mean, that continued ſtroke of judicial blindneſs and obduration they are now under, amidſt ſuch clear evidences of the truth, which none poſſibly could reſiſt, if that veil were not over their mind, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, and their reaſon and underſtanding under a viſible reſtraint; ſo that if theſe be conſidered what now hath taken place, and we are yet called to

believe, is it not moſt clear, the one is not more ſtrange and aſtoniſhing than the other. 2. We believe a pouring out of the laſt plague upon Antichriſt, which ſhall overturn his Seat and Kingdom; for this is expreſly foretold: But is it not evident, that nothing here is more ſtrange, and above humane appearances, than what this day is certainly ſeen of the truth of the Scripture, in his revealing the manner of his appearance, that height of his power and prevalence over the Saints, yea what is already begun and fulfilled of his downfall; which are Truths that I may ſay once ſeemed no leſs amazing to the Church at a diſtance, than the utter aboliſhing of that adverſary, looks to us this day. 3. It is a ſpecial part of our Faith for things yet to come, that ere long there will be a parting with time, and then ſhall we enter into an eſtate of everlaſting bleſſedneſs, which is a great Truth; yea ſo great, that it may be ſtrange how eaſie ſome can find the believing of ſuch a thing from joy and wondering thereat; but what do we ſee, and have brought near our ſenſes to confirm the Scripture? Is it not ſomething no leſs wonderful, that by the power of the Goſpel ſo many are entered out of darkneſs into

into a marvelous light, which is really another world; yea ſuch an eſtate that riſeth higher above the condition of men by nature, than that glorious condition of the Saints in heaven is now above theirs, who are yet journeying towards it; for the difference of the one is but in degree, but the other in kind. 4. We believe this day the Reſurrection of the dead, and an undoubted accompliſhment of that great Truth, which to natural reaſon would ſeem a ſtrange contradiction; but ſhould we not conſider, that the ſame truth, though in a ſpiritual way, yet moſt viſibly and upon an higher account is verified before our eyes; how it is ſure, ſuch are quickened and brought to life, who were dead in their ſins, were paſt feeling, yea for ſo many years have lain as in a cold grave, without ſenſe of God or their own caſe, who in one moment, at the voice of the Word, have been made to ſtir and ariſe; and is not this ſomething as diſcernible above nature, or the influences of ſecond cauſes, yea as marvelous an act of divine power, as the Reſurrection of the body in the laſt day, which ſeems ſo dark and ſtrange a thing for many to believe. 5. We wait alſo according to the promiſe for the ſe-

cond coming of the Lord, that this laſt piece of Canonick Scripture ſhall aſſuredly be diſcloſed in the event, when the Lord himſelf will deſcend from heaven with the voice of the Arch-Angel, and the trump of God, before whom theſe viſible heavens ſhall paſs away with a noiſe, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth be burnt up; for theſe are things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs: but it is ſure, nothing in all this is ſo marvelous or great, as what hath come to paſs, when we now know, that God was manifeſted in the fleſh, which is ſo marvelous a performance of the Scripture, that after this mens hearts can have no ſhadow for fear, or diſtruſt of the bringing forth of all that remains, there being this day ſo much in our hand, that we know the greateſt Truth in all the Bible hath already taken place.

*Sect.* 10. Thus is that marvelous diſcovery made clear before us, how great a thing the Scripture is, *whoſe words are ſeen to be works*, and not the notion or *idea* of things only, but ſuch as have a real being and ſubſtance; yea ſuch that their ſpeaking and doing is truly one and the ſame; if we could conſider, 1. How theſe are words

to

to be felt by the Soul, and as truly ſuited thereto, as for our eyes to read them; which have not only a ſound to the ear, but are ſweet to the taſte, yea ſuch as each of the Saints from experience can ſay, *thy words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the rejoicing of my heart, Jer.* 15. 16. 2. We muſt ſay, no words like theſe were ever written ſince the beginning of time, which can take life and root in the Soul, yea does it as really as the ſeed doth in the ground, and are fitted to be ingrafted and innaturalized there, ſo as no coalition in nature, betwixt the graft and the tree, can be more real than this, *Jam.* 1.21. 3. Theſe are words where the things promiſed, though hoped for, and to come, have even then a preſent being and ſubſiſtence in the promiſe, *Heb.* 11.1. yea, ſuch are they, that it can be truly ſaid, if a Chriſtian have the promiſe, he hath the mercy. 4. We know they are ſuch that can at once both ſpeak the Chriſtians peace, comfort, and ſtrength to them, and convey it, yea in that very moment effectuate what they ſay. 5. Is it not clear alſo, they are not more viſibly written in the Bible, than they are ſealed upon the Soul of a Chriſtian, and what may ſeem moſt wonder-

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ful there of the workings, breathings, ſtrengthenings, teachings, and witneſſing of the Spirit, are found to be ſo many undoubted realities turned over again in a practical hiſtory. Oh! what a book is this; which men, if they ſhut not their eyes, might ſee the living God only could frame; where two impreſſions are oft made diſcernible at once, the one of words and ſyllables by the Printers types upon paper, but the other of life and power by the holy Ghoſt, by whom theſe are made living words, ſo that the truth of grace, the breathings of God on his people, his felt preſence, and that near fellowſhip they are admitted to with him, may be ſeen to be nothing elſe but ſome part of this ſecond impreſſion of the Bible.

*Sect.* 11. Such are the wondrous works of God, wherein the Scripture is verified before us, as clearly ſhews, *his name is near*, and how ſenſible an approach there is this day of it to the Church, *Pſal.* 75. 1. How this is to be underſtood, ſome things would be previouſly conſidered, 1. That it is a truth verified to all, ſince there can be no poſſible diſtance from him who fil's heaven and earth with his preſence, ſuch

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is the immenſity of his eſſence. 2. He is near in a more ſpecial way oft to his people, when they are not aware, and can diſcern no evidences thereof, *Job* 9. 11, *he goeth by me, and I ſee him not.* 3. It is known alſo, ſuch ſolemn and ſenſible approaches of God there are, which no words can expreſs; yea hath been in that manner witneſſed to ſome, that it might be judged not fit to communicate to others, it ſhould ſeem ſo ſtrange what they have certainly known of this. 4. It is clear, the moſt demonſtrative evidence of ſuch a truth, is in theſe great events of the Scripture, and that there is it the holy God cauſeth his Name and Attributes paſs by before mens eyes with ſo viſible a diſcovery of himſelf as is ſuited to awake the ſleeping world, and call them up to an awful regard of his being ſo near. But oh how little ſerious advertence is to this, and to theſe immediate appearances of the Lord, in verifying his truth, a ſight from which moſt of this generation do flee; yea how much is loſt, even by the Saints, of theſe choice confirmations they might have thereof, through their not being more in an habitual frame to obſerve; but to evince the certainty of this bleſſed truth,

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and how near this his name is by a moſt ſenſible demonſtration to the experience of the Saints in all ages; Theſe ſure and known remarks I ſhall inſtance, 1. How it hath not been more diſcernible his ſpeaking to them in the promiſe, than that himſelf alſo hath done it, and hath given the performance in their hand of that very word whereupon he had cauſed them to hope, *Pſ.*119.49. yea thus ſo near an approach of his name, that as they knew a ſenſible and ſtrengthening influence on their hope to hold by the Word, when no appearances were of its taking place; now they ſee and are ſure of the return with that convincing diſcovery, *This is our God, we have waited for him*, Iſa. 26. 8. 2. It is clear, there is none of the Saints but in ſome meaſure know what it is to have their *Bethel*, where with *Jacob* they could ſay, *ſurely God was there*; and have found that upon ſo near an approach as hath made both the time and place remarkable through all their life, *Hoſ.*12.4. 3. It is known alſo theſe Providences do occur where an extraordinary appearance of God, and of ſome viſible appointments from Heaven, like to *Hagars* Well in the Wilderneſs, hath been ſo clearly witneſſed, as

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hath cauſed a preſent fear as well as joy to ſome of the Saints; and with *Abrahams* ſervant to bow down and worſhip with wondering at ſo near an approach of his Name, *Gen.* 26. 26. 4. It is ſure, there are palpable anſwers to prayer, the Saints have from Heaven, to witneſs *his Name is near*, which then brings a certainty and evidence therewith, of their being accepted, their ſuit taken in, a looſing of their bonds; yea, thus a communication of ſome divine thing to quiet the ſoul, which no words can poſſibly tell, what they have both ſeen and felt of ſo near an approach; *but ſurely God hath heared me*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 5. Is not his being near, then witneſſed, when he openeth mens ears to diſcipline, and ſealeth their inſtruction, that ſuch a power and authority is found with their light, as forceth its paſſage down to the reins, and the hidden parts, to make them go bound in the ſpirit about their duty, and to hear that voice behind them, which ſaith, *This is the way, walk in it*, Job 33. Iſa. 30. 21. I ſhall but add, that nothing can be more known, than that ſenſible retreat the Saints do find into this Name, when from outward preſſures their ſoul hath been ready to ſink, when

when thus it is ſet open to take theſe in, on whom all paſſages of relief from without have been remarkably ſhut; yea, thence ſuch a light found to break up with that immediate conveyance of ſtrength and ſupport, that can only be underſtood by theſe that feel it, *Pſal.* 9.

*Sect.* 12. We have ſolid warrant for this, that ſo great a light doth reſult from the accompliſhment of the Scripture, and theſe events wherein it takes place, as puts the *Angels in heaven* this day to the ſame ſtudy with us, to know by the Church the *manifold wiſdom of God*, and what marvellous Providences are thus witneſſed to his people; ſo that upon this account we know theſe excellent ſpirits who in that ſtate of perfection behold the face of God; even theſe are at School with the Saints here, to ſee and admire his works and various diſpenſations about the Church, where his Faithfulneſs and Truth do ſo brightly ſhine forth, *Eph.* 3. 10. For it is clear, 1. Such are the depths of Providence, and the unſealing of the written Word, which is the alone work of the Mediator, and under his hand, as goeth beyond the wiſdom of Angels, which they ſee and regard with wondering, but

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cannot comprehend, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. 2. It is ſure theſe have a more clear ſight, and with another kind of joy and delight look in on ſuch events of the Scripture that concern the Church, than can be by any here reached in the ſtate of Mortality: and thus have they a knowledg by experience and obſervation of the great works of God in the world. 3. Though ſuch are in a glorified ſtate, yet are they called to learn and have ſome new acceſſion to their joy and knowledg, and which may be truly ſaid, ſome further proficience by this marvellous ſtudy of the continued verification of the Word, how the counſel of the Lord takes place; yea, what a rare choice of means is to be ſeen for that end, how the contrivances of Satan, and all the Churches enemies are ſo directed, as to bring forth the contrary effects; and the temptations, ſtraits, and down-caſtings of the Saints, made the very way and method for their further raiſing: Thus alſo they ſee how marvellous a conſent there is betwixt that infallible certainty of events from the determination of the Lord, and the liberty of ſecond cauſes; and how ſmall and contemptible means are made moſt ſubſervient for ſome of his greateſt works.

works. 4. It may be clear from the Word what ſpecial acceſs theſe great Miniſters of Providence, the Angels, have for this bleſſed ſtudy, to ſee and obſerve the Wiſdom, Power, and Faithfulneſs of God, in their continued executing his Commands, and doing of his Will upon the earth; when 1. with a further light than can be known to us here, they do look in upon the whole conduct of humane affairs, and event of things in the world (in which their ſervice is more than we are aware of), and there ſee how all is ordered in ſubſerviency to the Scripture, and its taking place. 2. Theſe do in a ſpecial manner regard the Aſſemblies of the Church, and the great appearance of God there, as is clear 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. but how little is of this known or believed, that ſo near approaches thus are of the Angels, and their being preſent at the meetings of the Saints, where the Ordinances of Chriſt are truly diſpenced. 3. Such a continued converſe have theſe glorious Spirits with the Saints, in their care and overſight of them, that it may be truly ſaid, they are not only helpers, but joint-obſervers with ſuch, of the truth and tenderneſs of God, in the whole tract and conduct of Providence about them. It is

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ſure the miniſtry of the Angels does in no times ceaſe: and though it be not ſo clear from the Scripture, a proper deputation of ſome of theſe for each particular Chriſtian; yet what joy and aſtoniſhing thoughts ſhould it cauſe to conſider that it is ſo evident; theſe have a diſtinct charge and commiſſion for every one of the heirs of ſalvation, to prevent ſuch imminent hazzards, when they are not aware thereof themſelves, and ſee to their bodies as well their ſouls; to go before them in ſuch undertakings as are in the way of the Promiſe, for making them ſuccesful; to reſcue where ordinary means fail; yea, to *hold them up as in their hands, that they daſh not their feet againſt a ſtone?* Now in all theſe as it is clear how marvelloully they concur and are at work with delight; ſo have they ſome further knowledg this way, by obſerving the unſpotted faithfulneſs of God towards his people, yea thus are made partakers of their joy.

*Sect.* 13. This one Inference more I muſt add from the preceding demonſtration, How convincing and clear a witneſs there is to this great truth, of a *real energy* and *efficacious working* of the Spirit with the

Word, beyond any moral influence, or objective teaching thereof; *and of Principles of grace immediately infuſed in the Soul of a Chriſtian*, whence ſuch are put forth to theſe acts and duties, that no improvement of natural abilities could ever reach. This is a Truth of greateſt weight, which we ſee here ſo clearly evinced and proved, that I may ſay nothing poſſibly can be more to enſure the being and certainty of a thing than this; *the Scripture of God*, and *experience of the Saints*, that in all ages they have had of its verification, do in one witneſs moſt convincingly meet; for ſuch evidence from the Scripture there is, as all may ſee an eſſay to expung theſe bleſſed Truths out of it, muſt have the ſame reach to bring the whole in quæſtion, they lye ſo cloſe with its moſt ſubſtantial parts, and run as it were through all the veins and arteries of that bleſſed Record. And for the certainty of *experience*, with theſe diſcoveries on the Soul of a Chriſtian thereof, in that manner they are known, as may make it no leſs ſtrange to hear theſe brought in debate, than for a living man to be queſtioned about the truth of vital principles, without which he could neither act nor move. I am preſ-

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ſed to touch this, not only as it falls in on the road with the preſent ſubject of this Diſcourſe, and that from ſo neceſſary a riſe I could not now paſs it; but in a time alſo, when ſuch eſſays are as have gone a further length than to oppoſe the power and ſpirituality of Religion in the practice, to attaque it in its Principles, and run down the notion thereof, as ſome impoſture or fanatick dream, with which they would perſwade us, the world hath been until this day cheated; yea with a confidence as may ſhew what an hour it is on the reformed Church, when ſuch come publickly forth, as dare offer to affront the God of Truth, in the moſt clear diſcoveries of his Word, by giving them the lye, and the Spirit of grace in his eminent workings on the Soul; yea to ſcoff at all ſenſible intercourſe betwixt Jeſus Chriſt and his Church here upon the earth, in his manifeſtations and withdrawings, as the fumes of religious madneſs, or ſome ebbs and tides of the humours of the body. I confeſs, when at this rate they ſpeak, none needs wonder at perſonal reflections, as with a ſtrange height of inſolence they ſhew in reviling ſome, whoſe repute and honour in the Church for the Truths ſake is above their power to

darken. But what a time are we in, when Atheiſm ſo far out-goes its uſual bounds, that it is not enough to get from the heart to the tongue, but it muſt be down at the pen, to deride the truth of godlineſs before others; ſome ſerious thoughts of which, could not be without a terror and awful impreſſion on their hearts when alone with themſelves; and now muſt it not only be the ſong of the Drunkards, but a matter of publick ſcoffing and ſport by ſuch who have the name of *Doctors* within the Church? It hath put me to a ſtand with aſtoniſhment, to think what they poſſibly can intend in their venting ſuch Doctrines, which all may ſee is not to diſpute, but to droll the world out of any ſetled perſwaſion of the Truth, and to perſwade men to truſt their own eyes no more for what they read in the Bible, nor their experience for what is moſt certainly felt and proved on their Soul; but conform, in the matter of Religion, to the mode and faſhion of the times, as well as in their clothes: and to enforce this, ſome new and more effectual way muſt be taken, which I confeſs is ſuch as former ages have but little known, to dictate Atheiſm and Blaſphemy by Rule, and bring them within

in the road of Divinity, and the Doctrine of the Church. One thing in this looks to me with the greateſt terror, that ſad account which this gives of the temper and complexion of the time; when it ſeems to be conſulted as the way to gain repute for parts, and being maſters of reaſon, to decry the power and life of Religion; yea in that manner, as if their alone intereſt in owning the name of Chriſtians, were to have ſome more advantage for caſting reproach on Chriſtianity, and to weaken its awe on mens Soul: but it is well their deſign lies not in the dark, nor is the bait ſuch as can cover the hook from the moſt ordinary obſervers; and though they bring another Goſpel than what is delivered to us in the Scripture, which too manifeſtly may be evinced, yet is it under no ſuch appearance as Angels from heaven. What I ſpeak here is far from the leaſt intended irritation or prejudice at the perſons of any, againſt whom I know no intereſt or quarrel but one, which is for the truths ſake, and that bleſſed name by the which we are called; having ſo enforcing a call to this, in purſuance of the preſent ſubject I now treat on from a Doctrine ſtated in ſuch direct oppoſition thereto, and at this day thus pub-

lickly owned; which is this, "That Religion "is nothing elſe but what lies in Moral Vir- "tue, and a living up to the dictates of Na- "tures light; yea no truth in the influences "and efficacy of the Spirit on mens Soul be- "yond the objective teaching of the word, "nor no inward principles of grace, a new "birth, or any reality of a ſpiritual life, but "what are the illuſions of mens fancy; a Do- ctrine were it now owned, and put in the Churches Creed, we might truly ſay with the Apoſtle, *then is the Chriſtian faith in vain*, and hath been ſo in the moſt fundamental Articles thereof, ſince there was a Church in the world; yea then have all the Saints ſince the beginning of time been *falſe witneſſes againſt God*. I ſhall touch this but in a few words, ſince others more largely, and with much advantage to the Truth, have appeared therein; theſe particulars I only offer to be conſidered: How expreſs and undeniable an oppoſition is here, 1. To the written Word. 2. To the experience of the Saints in all ages of the Church. 3. To ſuch clear demonſtrative grounds of reaſon, as might enforce a conviction on the greateſt Atheiſts, though the Scripture were laid aſide. 4. How viſible the tendency of this Doctrine

ſtrine is, to ſtrike at the root and vital parts of Chriſtianity, which all may ſee by undeniable conſequence from it. 5. How obvious is it alſo that ſuch muſt oppoſe their own light and conſcience, in that reproach they caſt on the truth, and theſe whom at ſo high a rate they challenge of Enthuſiaſm and Impoſture, when the contrary is ſo known, that they can have no poſſible advantage for it, but by making lies their refuge.

For the firſt: Since it is clear, no other Scheme or Mould of Religion we can own, but from the Scriptures of God, let us but go in there and ſee what this is, and how expreſs an oppoſition it ſtands in to ſuch Doctrine as is now publickly vented; which, as the ſcales of the balance, are ſuch, that the one cannot poſſibly riſe, but with the going down of the other; when ſo plain and full the Scriptures witneſs is herein. 1. That it is an Evangelick holineſs and no Legal that is now required under the diſpenſation of the Goſpel; and not a conformity only to the will of God in his Law, but alſo to the Image of God in his Son; a Holineſs that from him as the principle muſt be derived, and unto him as the pattern can only be

conformed, *Rom.* 8. 24, *Having predeſtinated us to be conformable to the Image of his Son*; nor is the writing of the Law in our heart to be underſtood, but as it is a *conformity to that law of the ſpirit of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* This is the alone teſt, and no other we can know of Chriſtian Morality, which if men ſhew not that ſtamp and ſuperſcription thereon, let their pretences be never ſo high, it is a counterfeit, and caſt in a falſe mould, when brought to the Scripture, and before its light to be tried. And what a ſtrange ſhape ſhould theſe put upon holineſs, to divide it from its alone fountain Jeſus Chriſt, and the righteouſneſs of the Goſpel, without which it cannot poſſibly ſtand. The corruption of the excellenteſt things is found to be moſt noiſom; and I am ſure no contrivance could be beyond this, to turn ſo rare an antidote into poiſon; yea for what uſe ſhould the Goſpel be more, if Religion muſt all be ſummed up in a practice of Moral Virtue, and living up to the dictates of Reaſon, according to the light of Nature, as we ſee now openly profeſſed. 2. The Scripture expreſly ſhews, that the Lord looks to mens actions in their principles whence they flow, and does accordingly judg

judg thereof; and the *tree muſt be good*, elſe the fruit will be as the Apples of *Sodom*, for a *corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit*, *Mat.* 7. 18; nor can theſe *who are in the fleſh pleaſe God*, *Rom.* 8. 8. And what is more clear than the Scripture is here, that there are Principles of grace formed in the Soul of a Chriſtian; an *ingrafting of the word* into the Soul, *Jam.* 1. 21. and *a real transforming into the ſame Image*, 2 *Cor.* 3. *laſt v.* a being *made partakers of the divine nature*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. Yea, is there not a writing of the Law in the inward man, whence there is a ſpiritual enlightning of the underſtanding, and effectual determining of the will unto objects ſpiritual, and ſupernaturally good? and if men will deny the truth of regeneration, and a new life formed in the Soul; yet can they deny, that theſe are the words of our great Maſter himſelf, *except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of heaven*, and that it is written *Joh.* 3. 3? Or debate ſuch a Scripture there is, 1 *Joh.* 3. 9, that ſhews a *being born of God*, and how theſe have *his ſeed remaining in him*; in which a change no leſs marvelous is thus wrought than if a tranſmutation ſhould be of one nature

nature and kind into another. Why do not ſome prefix to their books, what they ſo viſibly import, a refutation of the written Word, when their peculiar aim is to impugn its truth, and turn the great inſtitutions of the Goſpel into a cheat and impoſture of Fanaticks. 3. Is not this the Doctrine of the Scripture, that *there is an evidence and demonſtration of the Spirit* with the preached Goſpel, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. by which the ſame truths that are taught by men, are impreſſed and made effectual on the Soul; and that *the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power?* yea is not a moſt dreadful account given of ſuch by the holy Ghoſt, and expreſly foretold, 2 *Tim.* 3.4, who having the *form of godlineſs*, ſhould deny the *power thereof*; whatever length ſuch a form may come in the material part of duties, and how plain a verification is of this, the world may ſee this day. 4. If men but read the Scripture, can they debate what of this truth is ſo clear there, that there is an in-being and union with Jeſus Chriſt, *Joh.* 16. 1, 2. *Rom.* 8. 1. as the hid ſpring of all a Chriſtians ſupplies, the principle of their ſpiritual enjoyments, without which mens furtheſt endeavours after holineſs cannot poſſibly

poſſibly reach that end; ſince from him muſt *our fruit be found*, *Hoſ.* 14. 8. and how he is unto his people, not their *righteouſneſs* only, but *ſanctification*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 4; yea how ſtraitly are theſe conjoined, a meritorious cleanſing from ſin by the blood of Chriſt, and that effectual cleanſing from it by the Spirit, *Tit.* 3. 5? 5. This does the Scripture alſo clearly witneſs, that there is another key to open mens heart, than moral ſwaſion; nor can mens *planting and watering* in the uſe of means do further, than there is a divine concurrence therewith to give the encreaſe, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6. and how a phyſical and moral influence do both anſwer to produce one and the ſame effect, *Phil.* 2. 8: a revealing of *Chriſt in us* by the Spirit, as well as an objective revelation of him is to us in the Goſpel; yea, how no conſtraint is put on the Saints, but what takes the true liberty of the ſoul in its conſent with it, it being a *conſtraint of love*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. *Cant.* 1. 4. 6. Is it not thus clear, that the ſame Authority which hath given a Rule for all moral duties in the Decalogue, hath commanded alſo the manner of their performance; and that no right worſhipping of God can be, but in ſpirit and truth; yea,

yea, that ſuch a reduplication ſhould be in the act and doing of duty, to do it for the Lord, to give to a diſciple as a diſciple; and ſo labour, *That whether abſent or preſent we may be accepted of him*; this alſo is ſhewed *Pſal.* 51. 6. that it is *Truth in the inward parts* he eſpecially regards; and was it not ſomething elſe than the moral rectitude of an act, or its conformity on the matter to the Rule which gave the Widows mite ſuch a preference, made that difference betwixt *Cain* and *Abels* offering? I ſhall but add this; If the quality of the Principle were not morally eſſential to an action, then *Judas*'s ſorrow might have been true repentance, which was ſo intenſe and real a grief.

2. As the expreſs oppoſition of ſuch Doctrine to the Scripture is undeniable; how manifeſt a contradiction is here alſo to the experience of the Saints in all Ages of the Church, who in theſe great truths have put to their ſeal, *That God is true*; wherein ſuch fear not to make him a lyar. I need uſe but few words in ſpeaking to this which at ſuch length is held forth elſewhere: and where, I muſt ſay, none can ſeriouſly exerciſe Reaſon, but ſees no poſſible fallacy or impoſture can be here; but if

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men muſt try their wit to undeceive the world from ſuch a Cheat as ſome pretend this to be, and deny its truth becauſe they are ſtrangers to it themſelves; they will not think it ſtrange that we cannot quit the Scripture, nor at once deliver up our Reaſon and Judgment; yea, cannot ſo far contradict both ſenſe and feeling, as to come over to their way: nor need ſuch wonder, it is not eaſie to unteach the doctrine and ſubſtantials of Chriſtianity, to theſe who know its truth upon their ſoul; or perſwade a living man that life and motion is but an illuſion of his fancy: for with no leſs certainty do the Saints know theſe Truths, which now are ſo publickly diſowned, 1. That a real intercourſe betwixt Jeſus Chriſt and the Soul is no imaginary thing, but ſuch as they know to ſurpaſs all the delights men ſeek or can ſuppoſe in a wallowing in ſenſuality; and, That then they are in no dream, but awake, and in the greateſt compoſure of mind, when under his ſhadow they have ſate, and his fruit was ſweet to their taſte, when his Name as oyntment was poured forth, and their heart made to melt within at their beloved's voice; yea, when with the Church he hath taken

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them in unto more ſpecial retirements with himſelf, and there hath given them his love, *Cant.* 7. 9. when his ſenſible embracements under ſome bitter afflicting Croſs, hath been ſuch as hath made them forget the ſmart and pain thereof. Oh where do we live? Is it in a Chriſtian Church? thus to hear that ineſtimable love of Jeſus Chriſt, and theſe bleſſed communications thereof to his people, brought by ſome to the Pulpit, and others to the Preſs, as a matter of publick ſcoffing and deriſion? Can it be ſaid in the houſe of his friends, ſuch indignity is offered unto him? But though theſe ſport at ſuch an appeal as they pretend ſome have made unto the Tribunal of God, it is like their confidence may fail to hold up at this rate, when it comes but near the drawing of their laſt breath; or to put ſuch Religion in their Teſtament, which they fear not to put in their Books. 2. This aſſurance have all who know the truth, (oppoſe it who will) to own as a matter of experience, yea with that certainty, as they know the truth of any thing; That there is a real and ſenſible intercourſe here betwixt the Word and the Soul, by communications of life, ſtrength, joy, and light; and how this is no product of Enthuſiaſtick

thuſiaſtick fumes, but as they are a manifeſt ſeal and verification of the Scripture, ſo is the reality thereof as ſure; yea how marvellous an up-breaking of light is oft found this way, to diſcover the wondrous things of the Word, which at other times are hid, and no more within their power, than to cauſe the Sun to ſhine when it is under a dark cloud. 3. It is the witneſs of the Saints, which from ſure experience they know and give in to the truth; and being of a ſpiritual life, as that which no leſs ſenſibly is demonſtrate, than that men have life and being by nature; which though it is not by birth, nor hath a riſe from natural cauſes, yet hath its vital acts and proper operation as really put forth, as the acts of breathing and moving are by a living man; a life that hath peculiar delights and enjoyments ſuited to its own nature, ſuch as have not the leaſt affinity with the fleſh; yea, a life with as real communications and influences both of light and ſtrength from above, as it is ſure our bodies are influenced with the warmings of the Sun. Some may take the confidence to deride this (as now this way ſeems an advantage in ſuch an age), when a prophane drollery gains

gains more than the moſt ſolid demonſtrations of truth; and no ſuch effectual mean conſulted, as that to gain repute: but I may with ſome more confidence ſay, if theſe knew what is the Chriſtians evidence of the reality of ſuch a Truth, and what they live and feed on, and truly enjoy, where the world can be no witneſs; this mirth ſhould ceaſe, and debate about the ſolidity of Religion, or ſcoff at thoſe who are moſt in earneſt about it. 4. It will be too hard a work for men, to diſpute a Chriſtian out of theſe ſenſible taſtes of acceptation and peace with God, the joy of his preſence, and their being impowered to approach unto him, with the liberty of the Spirit of Adoption, who at other times know the ſad reſtraints and bondage their backſlidings hath put them in; nor will it be eaſie to ſhake ſuch about the certainty of Gods being the hearer of prayer, and his giving anſwers thereto upon their ſoul, before they have got them in their hand; whoever knew the truth of ſerving him in the ſpirit. I confeſs ſuch a ſtated Controverſie may ſeem above ordinary reach, for ſome thus to come forth and perſwade theſe who ſee with their eyes, that their ſight is but

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an illuſion of the fancy; and what they really hear, is but in a dream; there being no ſuch thing as a viſible object or audible ſound: and yet this muſt paſs for Fanaticiſm, that we cannot be forced or hectored out of it, which the Chriſtian Church hath known, and all the Saints experienced ſince the time of *Abel* the righteous; but we fear not to own ſuch a challenge. 5. I muſt ſay, they are far from reſpect to Enthuſiaſm, or any impulſe not according to the Rule, whoſe experience can witneſs that truth of their being inſtructed of the Lord by a ſtrong hand, and his following light on the ſoul with moſt diſcernible power and authority, for ſome piece of work and ſervice he hath called unto; for this they own, and only know in the way of the Word, even when in ſome more than ordinary way, they are forced to ſee he teacheth as no man can do; and how eaſie he can make their work to follow, when he goes before to lead, with ſo ſenſible an up-breaking of ſtrength as is found therewith.

3. What a viſible repugnancy to *Reaſon* is here, though men ſhould reject Scripture and the experience of the Saints, when

ſo much is to inforce by a rational demonſtration on all, who never knew the power and efficacy of grace, and energy of the Spirit on their own Soul, That here is no falſe ſhew or deceit; theſe being ſo clear, as they can be hid from none. 1. How the cauſe muſt be certain, and no counterfeit, where its peculiar and proper effects are ſo real and known to be ſuch, as from no other cauſe could be produced; ſuch as to make a divorce viſible betwixt mens Soul and what once was as their right eye, and move with a native unconſtrained motion, to that from which they had before the greateſt natural averſation; yea to cauſe a ſatisfied choice of the Croſs and reproach of Chriſt, before all the pleaſures of the earth; ſo that they are found to rejoice in tribulation, and when they are weak, to know the greateſt income of ſtrength: and muſt it not be a divine ſupernatural power that can diſpoſe the heart into a moſt diſcernible tenderneſs and melting at the Word, where no natural ſoftneſs of ſpirit could be alledged for this, and cauſe them tremble with a ſurpriſing terror upon their ſpirit at the hearing of theſe Truths which they formerly made ſport at? It is ſure,

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ſuch an effect alſo cannot be hid from the world, how real a transforming of the Soul of a Chriſtian there is by the power of the Word into the ſame image and likeneſs, which is an effect could no more be the product of moral ſwaſion, than he who paints a mans face could put life in ſuch a dead image. 2. If there be no truth and certainty of infuſed Principles of grace, and real efficacy of the Spirit; it is then clear, the moſt obſervable fruit and progreſs of the Goſpel ſhould follow the greateſt advantage of gifts and objective helps; when nothing is more obvious, even to Reaſon, than the contrary of this, how *the kingdom of God is not in word but in power*; and that the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, and *fooliſhneſs of preaching*, as the Apoſtle calls it, is ſeen to exceed all humane eloquence; yea, how the moſt poliſht diſcourſe, and greateſt ſtrength of Reaſon, does often make but weak preaching with the leaſt real efficacy: And here none can deny, what in all times hath been ſo obvious a remark of a change by grace wrought on ſome, where the world might ſee no ordinary means, no company, no example, nor any uſual way for inſtruction could be ſubſervient for it, to witneſs

there is an immediate teaching of the Lord. 3. It is convincingly obvious to reaſon and ſure, how there is an unſeen power put forth upon the Conſcience, in giving it a wound, for which the furtheſt improvement of natural helps or moral ſwaſion can find no cure; yea ſuch a wound is this ſometimes ſeen to be, as no rack or outward torment is comparable thereto, which no reaſon then can allay, or the moſt convincing Arguments and Propoſals of the greateſt comforts in the world, but grows upon them the more they ſtrive with it; when in one moment its relief from another cauſe is found to come, and oft ſuch a cure as is no leſs marvelous and demonſtrative of ſome higher power above Reaſon to work this, than the wound it ſelf, which all may ſee is ſomething men cannot ſpeak, nor humane arguments inforce; but whatever word may then be made uſe of, it is an immediate conmmunication from Heaven of light and joy therewith on the ſoul, that makes it effectual. This is too ſad a Truth for men to ſport at, who have no ſecurity from his hand, that in all Ages have let the world know what the power of the Conſcience is. 4. I am ſure none can be in the dark with ſuch

ſuch a diſcovery, That ſomething there is above Morality, or any external helps, as to the truth of a judicial *Induration* on the ſoul, when thus, as the Word ſhews, it is ſo viſibly ſeen, how many have got beyond the reach of means, yea diſcernibly preacht worſe, more deaf and dead under the greateſt advantages this way, whereby others are enlivened; men cannot but know no outward cauſe is here, nor is it ſo rare a ſight this day within the Church, to bring it in queſtion how light and conviction (yea, when all that moral helps can poſſibly do, is put forth to the full) are yet ſeen to reſolve in a further rage and malice againſt the truth, to ſhew it is an immediate ſtroke from God for mens abuſe of light; and whence the wound is, there only can the cure be expected. 5. Though no acceſs ſhould be to convince from Scripture, yet if ſuch great Pretenders to Morality will admit, that in ſome caſe the Moral certainty of a thing can be ſo far evinced, as to the fulleſt ſatisfying of the mind, then it is ſure, nothing poſſibly can be more than is here, to ſhew it's no dream or impoſture for which ſo great a witneſs is given, from thoſe whoſe truth and moral integrity their adverſa-

ries muſt confeſs, and fear not to credit in any perſonal intereſt; nor will they debate their judgment and capacity to diſcern of things as well as others (leſt they ſhould bring their own in queſtion), and that from outward gain or incitements this way, ſuch have no cauſe to be acted; nor is this a witneſs from ſome few, and in one age, or in a corner of the earth, but is the known record of the Church ſince the beginning of time, and of ſuch who have been ready at all times to render *a reaſon of this hope within them*, yea appeal to the trial of others, even of their greateſt adverſaries, to come and ſee if the efficacy of grace, the inward workings of the holy Ghoſt upon the Soul, and that truth of a ſpiritual life, be any falſe ſhew; and is not the world forced to obſerve with what compoſure of Spirit, and with their dying breath, when on the neareſt approaches to another life, theſe fear not to atteſt this, and go in bearing that teſtimony before the Tribunal of God?

4. I offer here to be conſidered, what ſuch Doctrine as is now ſpread, evidently implies, and whither it tends by undeniable conſequence, ſhould it be received

ceived in the Church; when thus, 1. We muſt look after ſome other Bible, than the written Word; nor can its authority have any weight, as that which is *regula regulans*, when in ſo expreſs terms the Chriſtian Faith and the truth of all ſupernatural Revelation is here called to the Bar of Natures Light and the Dictates of mens Reaſon, to be owned or caſt, as it anſwers thereto, which thus ſo expreſly is owned as the alone Standard to regulate the whole both of Faith and Obedience. 2. May not all ſee, its not at the uppermoſt boughs, but at the root that ſuch Doctrine ſtrikes, to ſubvert mens Souls in that greateſt Truth of the *uſe* and *efficacy* of Grace? yea what a length they run beyond *Pelagius*, or the *Arminian* Doctrine, who do not profeſſedly deny all *efficacious working* of the Grace of God, or its being a partial cauſe, though this they admit not antecedaneouſly and independent on the will, but eventually, becauſe of its concurrence therewith; but here is the very being and operation of Grace, and of all real influences from God on the Soul at once cut off, except what ſome would reſtrict as miraculous to the firſt times of the Church. 3. Then ſhould there be

no other operation aſcribed to God, if this be admitted, for the begetting an increaſe of faith, than what is given to the miniſtry of men, by moral ſwaſion, and in effect the ſame kind of efficiency to ſuch as plant and water with him who giveth the increaſe. We deny not this honour have inſtruments, to co-operate with him in their own ſphere: but what horrid blaſphemy ſhould it be, to put ſuch in the ſame ſphere of working and efficiency with the Glorious God? 4. Is it not clear, how thus that great relation of the Mediator, as the influential Head of his Body, which is the Church, and his governing by the Scepter of his Spirit, is here wholly made void; yea thus no uſe of prayer for ſpiritual influences, or to look up to heaven for our being ſtrengthened in the inward man; and why do not theſe faſten their reproach alſo on the Churches Liturgy, for ſo groſs a cheat in the publick Worſhip of God, which in effect they declare this to be that men ſhould pray for the *gracious aſſiſtance of the Spirit*, and to be *illuminate from above*, when this only is the effect of an Enthuaſtick ſpirit. 5. And does not the admitting ſuch Doctrine moſt expreſly infer

infer, that *Enochs* walking with God, *Jacobs* wreſtling by prayer, and theſe ſenſible returns he had thereof, *Abrahams* believing againſt hope, and all appearances of reaſon, with theſe frequent changes of *Davids* inward caſe, which we read in the *Pſalms*, were but the illuſions of fancy, and no uſe for ſuch a record in the Word this day to the Church. I ſhall but further add, how ſtrange a Doctrine is here, that makes void the whole intent of the Goſpel, and ſcorns to take heaven at ſo low a rate as upon the account of grace, but muſt carry it by triumph, and for this will leave the Scripture, to find ſome new paſſage, ſince they cannot go in the ſame road, for being ſaved with ſuch they ſo much hate and deſpiſe.

5. Let it conſidered, what poſſible advantage theſe can pretend to faſten ſuch reproach on the Proteſtant Doctrine, and theſe who adhere to it, (againſt whom they thus appear), of Enthuſiaſm, or its detracting from reſpect to Morality, when they know, and upon their Conſcience cannot deny this witneſs, that ſuch, 1. Own no impulſe or internal motions which are not according to the Rule, but that it is before

before this light they offer to come, and to his deciſion who ſpeaks to men by the written Word; If theſe diſcoveries, influences and efficacious workings of God on the Soul, which their experience do witneſs, be not ſuch as they ought to ſeek and look after, by expreſs Scripture-warrant. 2. How theſe alſo are in greateſt earneſt both to diſcover and guard againſt the appearance of Enthuſiaſm, and to keep others off from ſplitting upon any ſuch Rock; nor can it be hid, what is their ſtanding witneſs againſt it. 3. It is ſtrange, with what confidence they can own this challenge of their decrying the vigorous improvement of our natural faculties, and want of reſpect to Morality, who own the Doctrine of the Goſpel; when they know none preſs more a practical conformity to the Law, with theſe engagements that the freedom of the grace of God puts upon men thereto; but this we confeſs, and muſt witneſs with grief, that the Morality of ſome Heathens puts to ſhame the profeſſed Piety of many Chriſtians in this age, whoſe walk gives too viſible an advantage to queſtion if there be a truth in Religion, when ſo much impoſture is found under this cover. 4. It

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is ſure, this can be from no want of light, ſo publick a decrying of the Doctrine of Grace, which is turned this day in faſhion; when it is ſo clear, nothing is thence to make the Law leſs ſtrict, or ſin leſs odious; but that here are the ſtrongeſt inforcements to holineſs, and its peculiar intent known to teach us *to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*; yea, how thence are the cleareſt inferences for this, that ſuch who have *theſe precious promiſes ſhould cleanſe themſelves, &c.*

I muſt ſhut up this with an anſwer to two Queries, that ſometime have lookt to me with a ſtrange aſtoniſhment; The one is, That no error in the judgment ſo groſs or monſtrous is found to break up, but does ſtill prove in ſome meaſure contagious, and wants not followers within the Church. The other is, what can influence ſo ſtrange a prejudice and oppoſition at the Doctrine of Grace, and Righteouſneſs of the Goſpel, as is at this day, that men ſhould be found to take ſo ſad a revenge upon themſelves, from pure malice at ſo excellent a Truth; when it is ſure, theſe do not think to inforce their Doctrine by a convincing witneſs of ſuch heights of Morality in their practice,

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as they contend for by their pen; but is too obvious, how far in this they comply with the temper of a looſe time, to ſubvert in ſo far the Chriſtian Religion, that they may have none at all. For the firſt of theſe, it needs not be ſtrange if we conſider, Firſt, That no error in the judgment, but is a work of the fleſh, and a moſt natural ſuiting thus betwixt a falſe way and a corrupt heart. 2. Since the greateſt contempt of God, which men can witneſs, is their not receiving the truth when it is clearly offered; it is not ſtrange that a delivering up of their Reaſon and Judgment unto ſtrong deluſions, ſhould be made to anſwer thereto, which is certainly one of the greateſt ſtrokes from God inflicted here. And is it not clear how theſe ſtrong incitements from the Devil, with the power and energy thereof, are more obſervably witneſſed upon the mind, than upon the affections; yea, ſuch monſtrous productions are this way, as may be more demonſtrative of his immediate and mighty working on the ſoul, than the moſt horrid acts of prophaneneſs: Thus alſo the world may ſee, 'tis the acting over the ſame Scheme, though new Actors are brought forth; and in what a round and

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circle deluſion moves, and how old antiquated errors are ſeen to riſe and ſpread, which former times ſeemed to have buried. For the other Query, How ſo ſtrange an oppoſition is this day found againſt the Goſpel, and the righteouſneſs thereof, none needs to wonder, when it's ſo clear, firſt, That the Law ſuits more naturally to men than the Doctrine of the Goſpel. Secondly, That there are degrees of oppoſition to ſome points of truth as they are more for the Glory of God and promoting of his Intereſt; and therefore is it not ſtrange, ſo great an aſſault is here to poyſon this fountain. 3. What can be more clear, than that account the Apoſtle gives to reſolve this, *Rom.* 9. 32, in their caſe who withſtood then the righteouſneſs of faith; *for they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone*; and therefore does the Holy Ghoſt call it, *a ſubmitting to the righteouſneſs of God*, which to Nature is as a bowing down below that grandeur and glorying in it ſelf, which it cannot endure to give.

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

A Third particular upon this Subject, is ſome ſerious enquiry into theſe grounds, Why among theſe who profeſs godlineſs in this Age, a through and ſolid confirmation in the truth is now ſo rare, and their perſwaſion of it, ſo little proportioned to the greatneſs of that ſeal and atteſtation which is this day before them; for it is too manifeſt, which the way of moſt within the Church doth witneſs, how doubtful and fluctuating that reliance they have on Scripture-truths is, as a thing that lies in opinion, and probable conjectures, more than in any degree of certitude. I confeſs it is the peculiar work of the ſpirit to open the eyes, and enlighten the ſoul by an effective illumination, and diſcover to us the evidences of divine truths; nor can the propoſal of the object with the greateſt certainty of evidence, or by any moral reaſoning, cauſe men diſcern ſpiritual things ſpiritually; ſince there muſt be a ſupernatural light, and ſuiting of the viſive faculty to the object; but is it not clear alſo, how much the obſtruction and culpable cauſe is on our part, and

and we can only blame our ſelves why ſuch a price for wiſdom is put in mens hands, and no heart to improve it: ſome few of theſe *Cauſes* I ſhall here inſtance, the ignorance whereof keeps us from a Cure, becauſe the Diſeaſe is ſo little known.

*Sect.* 1. Chriſtians do but little reflect upon their own experience, to know what it means, nor have their conceptions any proportion to the greatneſs of theſe truths that are before them, which is one ſpecial cauſe why ſo much is given to eſtabliſh and ſtrengthen, and yet ſo unanſwerable an improvement for this end; but what is to be underſtood here by ſerious reflexion, I muſt ſay, ſeems a rare exerciſe to moſt who profeſs godlineſs in this time: 1. To bring near their thoughts to the truth, for getting another ſight thereof than they formerly had, and their ſpirits more deeply impreſſed with ſo great an import of theſe things which are freely given them of God; how they are no ſhadow nor appearances of things, but moſt viſible realities. 2. To have ſuch a returning of the ſoul upon it ſelf, as to queſtion over again the certainty of theſe Truths which are thus made out by experience, yea, as at a ſtand how to credit their own eyes therewith,

with, they are ſo marvellous and great; thus was it with *Solomon*, 2 *Chron.* 6. 18, *But will God in very deed dwell with men upon the earth?* And ſuch was the exerciſe of that poor woman after ſo ſtrange a ſurpriſal of Providence, *Gen.* 16.13, *Have I alſo looked after him who ſeeth me!* Is this the Lord? And do my eyes truly ſee what I ſee in ſo great a mercy? O what a choice and confirming exerciſe ſhould this be, when a Chriſtian can thus ſit alone, and reflect on their experience; It is ſure I exerciſe reaſon, I am not aſleep but awaking; and herein know I am not deceived, that there is a ſpiritual life and immediate fellowſhip with God here, and that I know whom I have believed; yea, except I contradict my ſenſe as well as reaſon, I am ſure, with that God on whoſe word I lean for eternal life, I have been oft ſenſibly refreſhed, and found that in his company which no words can expreſs.

*Sect.* 2. There is this *Cauſe* may be ſeen, The very aims and propoſals of Chriſtians are ſo low, and their enquiry not ſuited to ſuch a warrant as they have *John* 16. 24, *To ask that their joy may be full*: But theſe

theſe great confirmations of the truth which the Saints have oft had, and yet are communicable in the way of the Word, ſeem by moſt of this generation to be laid by as ſome extraordinary things; which doth clearly witneſs, 1. An unacquaintedneſs with the Scripture, and the extent of many Promiſes there, with which Chriſtians thus are allowed to trade, for getting up to more high degrees of peace, comfort, and aſſurance of the truth, than moſt have either a heart to ſeek, or faith to credit: O what a depth this is, that will never be fully opened up, until we be in Heaven, what it is to have the written Word ſo near, and what this might be to a Chriſtian here by the way. 2. This ſhews how little a further growth in the faith of aſſent is known, and that giving all diligence to the full aſſurance of hope, as that with which our growth in love, patience, humility, is indiſſolubly linked, and keeps a proportion. 3. There is little coming up to that practice, where ſuch great things from the Lord have been ſhewed to his people in former times; *Our fathers truſted in thee, and were helped*, Pſal. 22.3. Theſe had indeed a marvellous ſeal, and rare confirmations of the truth, which ſeem ſtrange

to us; not that they were out of the way of the Promiſe, but becauſe the ancient holineſs of theſe times is ſo little known. How rare a practice is it to believe, to follow the Lord fully, and have a large venture in his hand, and what ſuch a wreſtling, and ſupplication with weeping, that is *Hoſ.* 12. 4. by which they had power with God, and did prevail; and therefore are many rare mercies withheld from us, which lye hid in the Word.

*Sect.* 3. It may be ſeen, how eaſie an aſſent moſt find to the great Fundamentals of the Scripture; and the Church is no leſs ruined this day by Credulity, than profeſſed Atheiſm; which is too evident a cauſe why ſo many know not what it is to believe, or be concerned about ſuch a thing, for thus they take all on truſt, are carried in the croud, not diſquieted with theſe aſſaults a ſerious Chriſtian is oft preſſed with; yea, come not that length to queſtion the certainty of the ground whereon they build, if it be not to unſettle themſelves more than to confirm. Oh! what a ſad ſight may this be, when it is no leſs than the venture of an immortal Soul for eternity, about which if men be deceived, they are deceived

deceived indeed; and it is not ſeen, what a fatal conjunction oft is betwixt credulity and impoſture; where the deceiver and ſuch as find it eaſie to believe, meet together in the ſame road.

*Sect.* 4. Though from reaſon there is a ſufficiency of evidence to convince, yet is it clear, that ſomething farther is indiſpenſibly required for a firm aſſent to the truth; which is to know the truth and reality of the Goſpel by experience on the Soul; for without this there can be no cure for Atheiſm, nor can it be known there is a truth in that Religion they profeſs, when within themſelves there is ſuch a contradiction to it; it is indeed ſtrange, what aſſent theſe can give to the ſupernatural Truths of the Word, which though nothing is more ſure in it ſelf, yet from them is a falſe witneſs, in ſo far as it is againſt their own knowledg, whilſt their Conſcience muſt ſay, the Scripture was never that to them, that it declares it ſelf to be, and that witneſs which it bears of the life of the Spirit, the earneſt of heaven, an immediate fellowſhip with God, and that the preached Goſpel is the power and wiſdom of God, was yet never to them a

reality, but as herein they confeſs God to be true, they make themſelves lyars, and contradict their own light.

*Sect.* 5. Is not this viſible before us? How Atheiſm is now turned contagious beyond the rate of former times; and ſeems to be the great aſſault peculiarly ſuited to this age, where the power of darkneſs moſt appears; a time when that deſign was never more on foot to have the Truth kept doubtful, that it be more a problem, and matter of opinion, than of certainty, and ſo much endeavour to caſt reproach on the way of the Lord; yea, a time when there is a ſore ſhaking by contrary Doctrine, the growth of ſcandal, and obvious blots on the profeſſion of godlineſs, ſo that many are in hazard to reſolve their Faith in an uncertainty of all principles, and clearly loſe any aſſured perſwaſion of the truth of Religion; but as this is witneſſed, and one of the ſad appearance of the time, it gives ſolid ground alſo to hope. 1. For a further eſtabliſhment Chriſtians ſhall be led up to before this generation paſs. 2. That ſome great diſcoveries and confirmations of the truth are yet to break up, and ſuch a brightneſs,

neſs, that will be as marvelous as the ſtrange darkneſs over the Church hath been; and that the Atheiſm of this age ſhall have a cure, though we may fear in ſome ſharp and extraordinary way, when ordinary means for this end have been ſo ineffectual.

*Sect. 6.* Is not here too evident a cauſe, whence ſo much dark and fluctuating aſſent is to the truth, when ſuch confirmations of its certainty are in our ſight; they are few who find it a great buſineſs to be eternally ſaved, and have their ſoul kept under ſuch a weight, to whom the thoughts of a heaven or hell are brought near, as undoubted realities, betwixt which there is no middle ſtate after death, but knows they muſt ſhortly be the inhabitants either of the one or the other; for if ſuch a deep impreſſion of this were on mens Souls, could they poſſibly be ſo unconcerned in their being ſure of the foundation whereon they have ſo great a venture. Such are indeed a rare ſight in this age, whoſe working out their *Salvation is with fear and trembling*; and moſt ſo far ſeem to be loſt in a throng of other things, that this greateſt queſtion which can occur

in all their life, *If they be born again?* is laid aſide until they be ready to dye. Oh! hath our light thus put us out of ſeriouſneſs, and giving all diligence, which is ſo indiſpenſibly required of theſe who mind heaven; will gifts, and a high repute in the Church, or a fair ſhew in the fleſh, be a ſure evidence to cauſe rejoycing, when once it comes to dye? This is a ſad ſubject, and I muſt ſay, If theſe characters of godlineſs the Scripture hath given were ſeriouſly pondered, there was never an age wherein more profeſſors are like to come ſhort of heaven, and be found in a fundamental deluſion about their ſtate than this is; for which ſome ſad evidences I ſhall here offer:

First, That looſe conception many have got of Religion, which they have framed in their own mould, ſo as to find an eaſie cure for all their doubts, and ſhift off the neceſſity of fear, tenderneſs and diligence in making ſure of eternal life, and thus are at work to have ſuch a latitude in their principles, as may ſuit the ſtrait and narrow gate which leadeth to life unto that liberty they take in their practice. 2. May we not ſee how far it is become a matter of wit and invention to be Chriſtians, and

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with what ſingular advantage many have learned to act handſomly ſuch a part; as if Divinity were rather a Science to be learned by rules of Art, than a matter of ſenſe and feeling, or ſome exquiſite image to pleaſe their eye, but ſuch as can put forth no vital acts. 3. Are not theſe times ſuch, wherein light hath in a ſtrange manner out-gone Conſcience, and tenderneſs, and that which the Apoſtle calls the form of knowledg, and of truth is like to ruine many, *Rom.* 3. So that it is rare to find a warming heat with a large profeſſion, ſuch as can make it convincing to others, and commends it to their conſcience. 4. It is now a time wherein Religion is remarkably enlarged in the notion, but oh how much abridged in the practice, even from what it hath been in times of greater ignorance. I muſt ſay, that length many in this age have come in the *Theory* of practical godlineſs, is like to be a ſad ſnare to help ſome to periſh with the more confidence and quiet. 5. It may be too obvious, there hath not been an age of the Church wherein profeſſors ſeemed further off from getting good of the Goſpel, and leſs acceſs to reprove, or for a faithful freedom with moſt, than is now;

but ſuch is the ſore and diſeaſe of many, as cannot endure to be touched, and therefore it is no wonder that God ſhould make ſo ſharp an application by the rod, of that which men will not apply to themſelves from the Word, or bear from others. 6. How ſad an evidence of this time is it, when the Religion of ſo many may be ſeen to have begun at their practice, before it once begun at the heart, and thence is it ſo eaſie to be Chriſtians in company, and in publick duties with others, who know little what it is to be ſuch alone, and be ſerious in theſe more retired exerciſes of Religion, which keeps the cloſeſt communication with the vital parts of Chriſtianity; but it is ſure, the greateſt part of a Chriſtians work is that which is leaſt ſeen, and hid from the eyes of others. 7. It may be ſaid, there hath not been a time wherein more were like to periſh at an *almoſt* in Chriſtianity, and with hid reſerves in their heart in a profeſſed following of the Lord, than is now; and that there is a right hand and right eye, which ere men who profeſs the truth adventure to quit, they will rather hazard all, whence is there ſuch a darkening of light, and extenuating

tenuating controverſies in a ſuffering time, when it may be ſeen, it is not ſo much a matter of dark difference as the ſcruple lies at the croſs in general, that for ſuch a ſtep in the narrow gate they muſt have an exception.

8. I ſhall but add this very ſad evidence of the hazard of profeſſors in this Age, That many are like to pleaſe themſelves with ſuch a mould of Piety as cometh ſhort of Moral righteouſneſs; and lay aſide that obſervance of the ſecond Table, which is ſo indiſpenſibly required of all the followers of God. O! what an amazing thing is this! as if this were not an eſſential part of holineſs, *without which none ſhall ſee the Lord*; and a part of theſe weightier things of the Law, which is to *do juſtice*, *love mercy*, as well as *walk humbly with God*; there is not under the New Teſtament a more dreadful threatning than againſt this, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 6, That no man over-reach his brother, for God is the avenger of all ſuch, and hath that mark put upon it when it is found among ſuch who profeſs themſelves his people, that it overpaſſeth the deeds of the wicked, *Jer.* 5. 28;

5. 28 ; yea, I muſt ſay, in nothing could the height of malice againſt Jeſus Chriſt act more to bring the truth under reproach, and cauſe the prophane world blaſpheme, than for any to perſonate Religion for a cover to ſuch a practice.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VI.

IN the laſt place, This great Truth of the verification of the Scripture would be conſidered as it leads *into practice*, and that ſingular advantage this way might be found, if we knew how to improve it; ſince this is a Talent for Trade, not for Contemplation; yea, it may be ſaid with a ſure warrant, This is the greateſt in order to a Chriſtians comfort and eſtabliſhment which he can trade with within time; which in ſome following *Uſes* I ſhall briefly touch.

*Sect.* 1. Thus ſhould every one of the Saints purſue a certainty of his own about the truth, That the written Word is the teſtimony of the living God, which is indiſpenſibly neceſſary for him to have, elſe he can have none at all; ſince this is a perſonal buſineſs, where all muſt prove their own work; for clearing of which, we we have to conſider, 1. How rare and ineſtimable a thing this certainty which I call a Chriſtians own, is to difference from what moſt of ordinary profeſſors in theſe times ſatisfie themſelves with. 2. How this way

way it is to be reached. As to the firſt, It is ſuch, 1. That cauſeth one to rejoyce within himſelf, and have a feaſt there whereof none elſe can partake, which hath no dependence on others, but is alone betwixt God and the ſoul. 2. It is ſuch as ſhould oblige him to ſeal the truth, though there were none elſe, and is ſufficient to put his ſoul to reſt in a ſatisfied reliance on the Word, though he have no incitement from the example of others, and be caſt in a time wherein Religion is every-where ſpoken againſt. 3. Such a certainty is this of the truth as hath been tried by temptation, and hath not wanted a previous conflict ere they came by it; yea, lyes ſo near them, as to be a ſerious exerciſe on their ſoul to know the ſolidity of that ground whereon ſo great an Intereſt muſt be built; and thus the greater aſſaults there are, it is found the way to a further length in eſtabliſhment. 4. It is ſuch wherewith theſe are not eaſily ſatisfied who have once got it; but it is ſome part of their continued work to know the Lord, by following on to know him in his Faithfulneſs in the Word, that he is ſurely that to them which he hath declared himſelf to be; and what a viſible impreſs there is of his truth in his

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Providences towards others. 5. This is ſuch as brings unſpeakable ſupport in a dark caſe, and helps the Chriſtian to rejoyce in the Promiſe, when no appearances are how the performance ſhould come, yea to a ſatisfied rowling over on God to reconcile his Word and Works when they ſeem to juſtle, and thus oppoſe what he hath ſaid, to what he hath done; knowing theſe can be in no real contradiction to one another. 6. So excellent a thing is this certainty of a Chriſtians own, as leads into an unſpeakable repoſe and quiet of the Soul in that laſt venture for eternity, when on the faithfulneſs of God in his Word he muſt lay the dead grip (which we ſee how dark a buſineſs it is to many) when thus ſo great an earneſt he finds in his hands of theſe Truths, the accompliſhment whereof goes beyond death, which are the reſurrection of the dead, and a being for ever with God; that he knoweth theſe are the Promiſe of God, whoſe ſenſible preſence, and familiar approaches to the Soul, a near converſe with him, yea his very immediate help from heaven in a day of ſtrait, he knows ſo well here by the way, to be a ſure performance of the Word, and by marvelous con-

confirmations thereof hath oft proved.

2. Let us conſider, of what ſingular uſe theſe near approaches of a Chriſtian to the Word, to know and be further confirmed of the faithfulneſs of God there in the Providences of his life, ſhould be, for ſuch a certainty: 1. That this is ſomething not reached by any tranſient glances of light, or ſome preſent flaſh of affection; but here muſt be a ſolid and rational arguing from the evidence of the premiſes to the truth of the concluſion; That ſince he is ſure, *The way of the Lord is perfect, and his word tried, Pſal.* 18. 30. which ſo oft he hath put to an eſſay, and in his experience had ſo many perſonal returns of its truth, he can of nothing be more certain, than he is of its being a ſafe ground for adventuring on. 2. Thus is the Lords Seal to his Truth made diſcernible, and ſuch a ſecret token and mark given thereof, which none can counterfeit. 3. Thus is ſo enriching a trade to be followed, as might every day lay ſome new ſtrengthening remarks in our way of the Lords being God, and his unſpotted faithfulneſs in the Word, whereon we have ſo great a venture.

*Sect.*

*Sect.* 2. There is this *uſe* which neceſſarily follows from the former, and a ſingular advantage Chriſtians ſhould make of the preſent ſubject, with theſe clear diſcoveries before them of the Scriptures verification, *for a through and ſolid determining their ſtate in Chriſt*; and that thus they may get up to ſome higher degrees of aſſurance thereof, than what moſt ſatisfie themſelves with. When to eaſe the Chriſtians work in this trial, and in multiplying marks, here is a ſhort abridgment of all he may have at his hand, to know the certainty of the Word, and theſe great ſupernatural Truths there, by experience on his own Soul; ſo as not in the dark, and with a doubtful aſſent, but from what he hath both ſeen and felt, he can put to this ſeal, *That God is true* therein. We know, until the Saints be fully poſſeſſed of heaven, nothing can bring a joy beyond this, *to be throughly aſſured of their being for ever there, and in his preſence where there is fulneſs of joy*, they ſhall paſs the long ages of eternity; Nor can any be too ſerious and concerned for making this ſure; yet it cannot be denied, but ſome exceſs even here is this day in the road of practical divinity, and theſe vo-

voluminous enlargements about ſigns and evidences of grace (in which much cautious reſpect needs to the various ſizes and degrees of growth amongſt Chriſtians and viciſſitudes of their inward caſe) yea, by extending theſe in ſo different a mould and ſhape, as hath tended to darken and render perplex the way to ſome more than for ſolid quiet of their ſpirits. The portraiture of a Chriſtian is ſuch, as none can draw to one model, but with reſpect to the infancy of ſome, as well as the further age and eſtabliſhment of others. What I intend here, is a but ſhort touch only for clearing this, how the Chriſtians way and method of trial neceſſarily lies, in a ſerious purſuance to know the truth, and have more near converſe with its verification on the Soul, as the beſt way to know their ſtate, and clearing up of evidences for heaven; and how theſe are ſo cloſely linked, as the one muſt bring forward the other; for which ſome few things I ſhall firſt premiſe, that by moſt of profeſſed Chriſtians, I muſt ſay, ſeem to be little underſtood.

Firſt, That there is none but in ſome meaſure muſt know a practical converſe with the Word and its accompliſhment,

if

if they be not ſtrangers to the very eſſentials of Chriſtianity; nor can there poſſible be a true idea and image of godlineſs impreſſed on the ſoul of any, but as it anſwers to the Scripture, and preſents its lively impreſs thereon.

2. That theſe hid marks, whence the Saints know the Scripture to be the Word of God, are ſuch as with the ſame evidence anſwer to determine their ſtate and being in Chriſt; yea ſuch, that by looking in on inherent qualifications, none can ſolidly argue to the certainty of grace from them, further than they know the certainty of the Word, and its accompliſhment on them. Now what ſingular advantage ſhould a Chriſtian thus find, when by this thread, as it were, in his hand, and ſo ſure a rule and line of trial, he can follow his intereſt in Chriſt, and have the ſight thereof kept clear by that undoubted intereſt and propriety he hath in the Word, from it's ſure accompliſhment to him; the want whereof, is it not too obvious a cauſe of ſuch darkneſs and confuſion as attends many in theſe enquiries they have about their ſtate.

3. Though it is undeniable that the World ſees at a diſtance, and cannot get

by ſome convincing witneſs of the Scriptures taking place, both in providences of Mercy, and theſe clear Inſtances in which the Lord is known by the Judgment he executes; yet do they not know, nor can poſſibly reach the Chriſtians trade here, which lies hid and deep in the Soul, in that ſenſible converſe theſe have with the Word, and its continued verification to them.

4. Doth not the word ſhew, what the Saints muſt know by experience, how cloſe theſe keep together in one tye; as we ſee them conjoined, *Joh.* 3. 33. That ſuch who truly *believe*, know alſo what a *putting their ſeal* to the truth is; ſince they are not only convertible terms, in ſo far as the one cannot be wanting, where the other really is, but ſuch that the certainty of the one muſt be cleared up by the other. I deny not, a dogmatical faith is in ſome meaſure reached when not ſaving; but it may be clearly evinced, that no true ſolid aſſent is to ſupernatural truths, without experience and a knowing the power and efficacy thereof on the Soul; nor can there be a fiducial application and recumbency on the truth, where this is wanting.

5. Though

5. Though it is too ſadly known, as one cauſe of ſuch dark evidence moſt have of their ſtate, that the Spirit of ſanctification runs ſo low, and untenderneſs in their walk; I muſt ſay, this alſo may be no leſs clear, which is ſo little ſolid perſwaſion of the certainty of the truth; and a ſad miſtake in the method moſt take, by ſeeking to ſecure a right and intereſt there, without a ſerious purſuance to be ſolidly founded thereon. And is not here the riſe of ſuch hæſitation, and a trembling gripe ſo many have in parting with time, and that great venture of the Soul on the promiſe; their work hath been ſo little by the way to have their adherence to the truth ſtrengthened by *knowing in whom they believed*, which made it ſo eaſie to the Apoſtle to put over himſelf and intereſts on that ſecurity.

6. This ſeems to be little conſidered, in ſuch enquiries ſome have about their inward ſtate, and whether they believe or not; how it is much greater to believe the truth in general, than any perſonal application thereof can be in their caſe; for which the Apoſtle clearly reaſons, *Rom.* 8.32, *He that ſpared not his own Son, how will he not with him give us all things?* for if we

be aſſured of that in which the greateſt difficulty of faith lies, muſt it not by clear conſequence follow, that what concerns our intereſt is but as a ſtraining at a Gnat, when ſuch a thing is once ſwallowed; and where a Chriſtian hath got this length, to believe the teſtimony of God is ſuch whereon with greateſt ſecurity he can repoſe his Soul; perſonal evidences cannot then ſtay behind, if there be a ſerious endeavour in their eſſays after holineſs. For the greateſt wonder is here to believe the truth of the Goſpel, that *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all who come unto him*, more than his ſaving of me; and it may be too obvious as the cauſe whence the laſt is obſtructed, from ſo ſmall eſtabliſhment in the firſt.

Having premiſed theſe, for clearing a Truth of ſuch weight, I ſhall offer ſome things to evince the neceſſity of a near and practical converſe with the Word in its accompliſhment on the Soul, as that without which no effectual acceſs can be to clearing up of evidences, and certainty of our ſtate in Chriſt; when it is ſo manifeſt, where this is wanting now can diſcern, 1. The *truth and ſolidity of grace*, how it is no caſual thing, but ſuch as moſt convincingly

vincingly anſwers the Word, and is its native product; which if it be not diſcerned, the one half of a Chriſtians evidence, from the *truth of holineſs* and *fruits of the Spirit* is then kept out of ſight; for whatever is ſeen of the being of grace in its *effects*, yet does he not ſee it in the *cauſe*, and how in that alone Channel of the Word and Promiſe its conveyance is to the Soul; yea without this could none comfortably reflect on the *things freely given him of God*, as knowing them to be ſuch; and on his own experience of the work and efficacy of the Spirit, if he cannot diſcern the clear making out of the Scripture there.

2. Without this could none know, what ſo rare and divine an art means, (than which I may ſay, in a mediate way, nothing can be of more uſe for trial of a Chriſtian ſtate), *to compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*, ſuch as the actings and influences of the Spirit with the Word, inherent evidences with the written Promiſe; nor according to this can he diſcern a divine efficacious concurrence meet him in the way of duty; and how the *original* which is without in the Word, and its tranſcript within on the

Soul, are one and the ſame; for what are the rareſt inward qualifications upon the matter, and how little ſhould they amount to a clear diſtinguiſhing evidence, if this *comparing work* of a Chriſtian be not known, how to ſet things one againſt another, ſo as each be under its proper aſpect.

3. It may be clear, without this no other converſe with the Bible could let a Chriſtian know, what the *truths dwelling within him* is, or how much thereof hath been turned into a practical hiſtory, and in ſuch a Character writ over upon his heart, that he is ſure Angels nor men could never have done; nor can he ſee how the ſame *ingrafted* and living truth (by as ſure a demonſtration as ever was of the motion of the blood) makes its way through the veins and conduits of a Chriſtians walk, for putting forth of vital acts there; in a right diſcerning of which, ſhould that great demonſtration be convincingly clear, that ſeems as a ſtrange and dark thing to many, what it is to be the *declared Epiſtle of Chriſt, written not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of ſtone, but in fleſhly tables of the heart*, 2 Cor. 3. 3.

4. With-

4. Without this could none of the Saints ſee their right and claim to the Promiſe cloathed with the actual poſſeſſion thereof; which is the earneſt here of that inheritance above; but where this is clear, what a marvelous evidence comes therewith, to the furtheſt quieting of the Soul; when thus a Chriſtian reflects, and can reaſon with himſelf, what of the Scripture and theſe great ſupernatural truths there, which the world knows not, he hath now made his *own*, and not in the offer and promiſe only, but in real performances.

5. Is it not clear, without ſome near and ſerious converſe with the Scripture, in the certainty of its verification, none could know the Seal of the Spirit; which though ſometimes it is ſo immediate and over-powering a teſtimony as ſilenceth all doubts and fears, when it hath no reſpect to any work of grace, or inherent evidences; yet even then it is *the Seal of the Spirit of the promiſe*, *Eph.* 1. 13, and ſuch that cannot be underſtood, but as a ſure accompliſhment of the Word.

6. Let us but conſider, what Chriſtian-aſſurance is (I mean ſuch as in a mediate way can be reached), and is it not a practical Syl-

logiſm, where the firſt Propoſition muſt ſtill be a Scripture-truth, and concludes from theſe ſure and undoubted experiments they have thereof on their Soul? for thus a Chriſtian ſolidly reaſons; Can I debate more my being for ever in heaven with God, who do ſo certainly experience what the Scripture has given as an infallible ſignof the truth of another world, and a being entred into it here; ſo as to breath another air, and from a ſtate of darkneſs to be taken into a *marvelous light*, which once it is ſure I knew not, nor could credit its reality on report; yea a light by which I diſcern the truth of ſpiritual objects to be as real as I ſee theſe heavens and earth by the light of the Sun, and am taught the way of ſenſible converſe therewith. Now when thus he reflects, does not there meet in one demonſtration, the two greateſt things can be deſired until he be in heaven, which are the *certainty of the written Word*, and of his *ſtate and being in Chriſt*; and thus ſee, how they anſwer other, and each ſo indiſſolubly tied, that no clear ſatisfying evidence can be of the laſt, but in a ſerious purſuit of the firſt.

*Sect.* 3. Such is this ſubject, and the ſerious *improvement* thereof, as might lead us in to know that notable art of Religion more in its *practice*, which may be truly called *ſcientia architectonica*, an art for extracting out of all occurrences of the time, and the ſtrangeſt providences, what ſhould tend to our further fixing in the truth, and make it eaſie and clear, how to reduce the works of God unto the written Word; yea, to reſolve his judgments through the earth in their true cauſe and original, which I muſt ſay from trial, is one of the rareſt of eſſays men could purſue againſt Atheiſm, and for aſſuring our heart more of the being and faithfulneſs of God, when thus it's ſeen how all the lines of providence lead from the Scripture, and return hither again, and do moſt viſibly begin and end there; ſo that whither a diſcerning Chriſtian looks, yet cannot he look off this, though he go from one creature to another, and from one piece of the work of God to another; but all ſtill meets with a moſt obvious tendency to make this demonſtration clear, *That God is true.* For my ſelf, I ſeriouſly profeſs, when ſuch dark Clouds are now caſting up, and amazing occurrences, ſo many

ny things to imbitter the world, this is the moſt ſtrengthening diſcovery I find within time, that ſuch clear glances of the *faithfulneſs of God* there are, and theſe ſo convincingly ſhewed forth amidſt the greateſt darkneſs and confuſions, as leaves no acceſs to debate the certainty thereof; for nothing elſe I ſee but what might help to cruſh and make faint, if this were not ſo ſure, *God hath ſpoken in his holineſs*, and nothing hitherto hath failed thereof; what was the word of *Luther*, *Pene deſperaſſem niſi Chriſtus eſſet caput Eccleſiæ*; might we not now ſay, if the ſame truth ſtood not good to us, and that the ſaddeſt of events brings ſo much in them, to ſtrengthen, and be a further Seal to the Word: But now is the Church ſore toſſed, we can alſo ſee the need thereof, and when ſuch rage and hatred there is againſt godlineſs, that it gets no worſe entertainment than was foretold. Is the truth avowedly oppoſed and born down? there doth the Scripture take place. Is it reproached? it behoved ſo to be. Yea, is it by ſubtilty and under a cover of friendſhip aſſaulted? this alſo is ſome part of its own accompliſhment. Do we not ſee, wickedneſs is ſtill the ſame? and that it is the ſame Spirit

rit now acts in the worſt of men that was in former ages? which ſhould no leſs tend to a confirming us of the certainty of the Word, than the truth of holineſs; have we ſeen any ſuch dark hours as did ever want a witneſs to that bleſſed Promiſe of a watching Providence over the Church? but when he ſmites with the one hand, he is ſtill found to uphold by the other; and no ſuch concurrence of things to cauſe grief, but ſomething as remarkably ſet againſt it, to be matter of joy and encouragement in the Lord; nor in any time is ſuch poiſon vented, but the very ſame time is found to bring an antidote with it, and the greateſt aſſaults againſt the Truth made ſubſervient for her further triumph. Now it is ſure, this is no dream, no romance, or a conjectural thing, but what in the greateſt compoſure of Spirit, each Chriſtian can diſcern and know its truth to be as undeniable and clear, as it is certain there is a Sun that ſhines in the firmament. What an ineſtimable advantage is here, if we knew how to improve it, that under all the varieties of providences within time, we may go in and out and find paſture, and thus get our faith more ſtrengthened, in ſeeing how men are forced

ced to promote Gods deſign by oppoſing it, and in reſiſting his will to fulfil it; the ſmalleſt things made ſubſervient to great purpoſes, when the moſt promiſing appearances are blaſted; how moſt are every-where thronged about perſonal intereſts, and their own things taking them up, whilſt the holy God does moſt convincingly turn all for his end. Yea, if we knew how to follow this great diſcovery, we ſhould convincingly ſee the greateſt ſurpriſals of Providence which upon no principles of reaſon men could foreſee, or any connexion betwixt the means and ſuch a product; how exactly they anſwer the Word, and are a Seal thereto. I ſhall but add, how it is not more obvious, that to every creature, faculty, and operation, there is as it were a thread faſtened, by which one may follow up and ſee *that God is*, than it is diſcernible here, how cloſe a conjunction is betwixt the Word and each piece of his Work, yea every ſtep of providence in the earth; whereby we may know, he is that which the Scripture declares him to be.

*Sect.* 4. This peculiar advantage ſhould Chriſtians make of ſo great a diſcovery of

of the *faithfulneſs of God*, and how nothing fails of all that he has ſpoken in his Word; for adventuring with a more full ſecurity on theſe *rare Politicks of the Bible*, which concern mens intereſts within time; yea thus to ſteer their courſe under many viciſſitudes of this life, by ſuch Maxims of divine Policy, which can neither err nor poſſibly admit a fallacy or miſtake. I muſt touch this a little, it is ſo ſtrange how ſmall weight even with moſt of profeſſed Chriſtians theſe ſeem to have; and whatever reſpect they witneſs to this bleſſed record, in taking it as their ſecurity for a life to come, or any ſpiritual intereſts; yet is it not ſeen, how viſible an exception is made in their reliance on the Word, for things of this life, but they will needs ſtrive to be wiſe in their actings, like the men of the reſidue of the Nations, and have the eternal and unchangeable Truths of God come down to their mould and reaſonings; which is an Atheiſm too manifeſtly owned everywhere. Oh what can this mean, to half the Scripture of God in ſuch a manner, as to adventure with ſome profeſſed ſecurity, on what is there for an eternal intereſt, but on other principles and contri-

vances

vances go for their concernments within time; yea ſo far allow themſelves to lay this aſide, as that which they think cannot poſſibly ſute the poſture and condition of their outward affairs: But for clearing this truth, I ſhall firſt offer ſome things to ſhew with what demonſtrative evidence a Chriſtian may adventure here on the certainty of ſuch infallible Rules, for all his temporal Intereſts, as well as theſe that concern an after-ſtate; And next offer ſome particular inſtances, where this demonſtration may be more clearly underſtood.

Firſt, Can we admit a divine Authority of the Scripture, and not ſee how the faithfulneſs of God ſtands good for every line and ſyllable there; yea, that theſe Rules it holds forth, muſt be no leſs ſure for the leaſt of a Chriſtians intereſt, than for an eternal ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt.

2. Is not this beyond all poſſible debate, how great an intereſt mens outward lot and concernments have in the written Word, that though no reſpect unto the command, principles of ſelf-love, and the intereſt of *gain* as well as of *duty* ſhould oblige to a cloſe adherence thereto.

3. Though it ſeems as a romance to many,

many, yet muſt we either quit the Scripture, or credit this, that the moſt infallible rules for one to raiſe his fortune, and inſure a deſtiny that can controul the Stars, are given forth there, where that evidently is found, *Sapiens dominabitur aſtris, & quo modo unuſquiſque faber poteſt eſſe fortunæ ſuæ.*

4. Are not theſe Rules alſo known and tried, ſo as the experience of all, who have followed the way of the Lord, did yet never fail to witneſs.

5. And is it not clear, how ſuch rules there are, of that univerſal Truth, as in no time the contrary was ever ſeen to be true; but the greateſt Sun-ſhine on mens wicked devices, and their contrivements of ſinful Policy, are ſtill ſeen in the cloſe to have ſome ſad and tragick reſult; yea that the bringing theſe to paſs, hath moſt convincingly tended for their further ruine.

6. Is not the true cauſe viſibly writ forth here, whence the falling out of events is ſo frequently ſeen to be croſs to all ordinary rules and method of ſecond cauſes, and the wiſe diſappointed in their work, for attaining ſuch ends, as could not but be expected to follow thereon, from appearances to reaſon; yea that ſuch fruit-

fruitleſs inquiries, with anxious and inordinate toil, the ſad miſcarriage of moſt deſired and deeply contrived projects, is ſo uſual a ſight in the world, ſo as mens hearts are ſometimes ready to deſpair of all their labours under the Sun; that the Scripture hath ſo little credit in their private concerns, but will ſteer their courſe by ſome other compaſs for attainment of what they intend.

7. Is not this with greateſt evidence demonſtrable, how practical prudence is the native effect of piety; and what helps to make one more a Chriſtian, hath a neceſſary tendency therewith to make him more wiſe; and to theſe rare accompliſhments of true Policy; when theſe are ſo clear: How much it helps to get command over the heart, and the moderation of paſſions. 2. For one to know and diſcern his own way, which is to be wiſe at home, and in what his neareſt concerns lye, *Prov.* 14. 8. 3. To improve the preſent Providence, and every change of his lot, for ſome further gain, ſo as he can follow his intereſt, by abaſement as well as abounding, and get up by that which ſeems moſt to depreſs him. 4. To have a more clear view of the conſequence and

and future iſſue of things, by knowing how to diſcern time and judgment, *A wiſe man foreſeeth the evil, and hides himſelf*, *Prov.*23.3. 5. Such alſo is its true tendency, to cauſe that temperature and counterpoiſe in the Soul, amidſt theſe continued viciſſitudes here, as he can rejoice with fear, and have his greateſt confidence under guard of a watchful circumſpection. 6. Is it not evidently found, in ſo far as one walks by theſe rules, how his hand worketh by the guidance of his heart, and does then act dextrouſly? which *Solomon*, that great obſerver, did ſo much regard, *Eccl.* 10. 2, *A wiſe mans heart is at his right hand, but a fools heart is at his left.* Yea then is light found to ſhine on his paths, for a more clear and eaſie getting through theſe incumbrances which are found ſo diſtracting, and ready to ſink the ſpirit of others.

8. For ſuch as lay the whole Scripture aſide, and have no ſuch weight upon them of an eternal ſtate, It is not ſtrange this ſhould have no credit for their intereſts within time; but is not here matter of aſtoniſhment, what reſpect and confidence men witneſs, for adventuring upon one part of the Bible, who viſibly ſhew they

have no confidence for the other? Can ſuch be in earneſt to improve ſupernatural Truths there for ſpiritual things, who ſee nothing of its uſe on this account, what a ſure trade they might drive in order to their temporal intereſts, ( yea whilſt they converſe not with the very notion of ſuch a thing )? I muſt ſay, no reaſon can comprehend this, how principles of ſelf-love ſhould have ſo little influence on men; nor can it be anſwered, but by admitting one of theſe two, that either the Scripture is not truly owned and believed by moſt of profeſſed Chriſtians as a ſecurity, on which they can adventure their heaven; ſince the ſame aſſurances are there by the God of truth, for mens intereſts here in the way; or that ſuch knowingly betray the end they propoſe to themſelves in their labours under the Sun, and act in direct oppoſition thereto, by ſo ſtrange a neglect, and laying aſide of the Scripture.

Having premiſed theſe, for giving light to ſo concerning a Truth; let us but clearly ſtate ſo great a duty, as the practical uſe and improvement of the Word is in a temporal caſe, and with reſpect

reſpect to our preſent intereſts in this life, as well as theſe which are eternal; that we may ſee the infallible connexion is betwixt the one and the other; *for he hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good*, as well as what is juſt, and where the ſureſt method and way lies for one to ſeek himſelf, and be wiſe for their own private intereſt; yea to attain and enjoy an outward lot with unſpeakable more advantage, than moſt let themſelves know, to prevent diſappointments, with ſore and ſtinging croſſes, that may be ſeen comes not out of the duſt, but are a product that all might diſcern from the Word, ſuch means they choſe to themſelves muſt bring forth. It is clear, that the ſame light which ſhews the way for being eternally ſaved, lets men alſo ſee an exact and infallible method, in all their concerns within time, and for ſuch a conduct as they may *walk ſurely*, by rule, and not at an adventure for this end; the ſlighting whereof hath cauſed many with ſore toil ſow the wind unto themſelves. I come now to inſtance ſome of theſe rare *Politicks*, and higheſt *Principles* of Wiſdom given to us in the written Word, in living up to which, one may

as it were chuſe his own fortune; I offer theſe, which are ſuch as we may fear more it ſhall ceaſe to be day and night, ſeed-time and harveſt, than that any of theſe fail.

1 *Principle*, *That to ſecure the ſucceſs of our way, in the appointed uſe of means, nothing is ſo effectual as a through commitment thereof to the Lord*; as it is clear, *Pſ.* 37. 5. *Prov.* 16. 3; and a truth hath ſuch a Seal from experience, that ſince Religion was in the world, I muſt ſay none ever tried it in vain; but the want of this hath inſtructed many to their coſt, how deceitful a thing the greateſt abundance of means oft prove. Now for confirming it, let us but compare the remarks and hiſtories of all times with the Word, and I am ſure it can be hid from none, how the moſt ſad ruining ſtrokes are ſeen to be a Pit of mens own digging, and moſt obſervably hath met theſe, who would chuſe a way to themſelves, and frame a Policy of their own, in counteracting the Word, which did at laſt undo them.

2 *Principle*, If the Scripture be true, mens Intereſt and Policy here then is, *That it is better to truſt in God, than put confidence in man*; *yea better to truſt in God*,

*God, than put confidence in Princes, Pſal.* 118. 8. which is a truth that never ſhamed the face of any to this day who adventured thereon, but oft hath their returns exceeded their venture. And moſt remarkably theſe have been even before the world ſet againſt one another, which we ſee, *Pſal.* 52. 7,8. *Lo this is the man, that made* not *God his ſtrength*, &c. *But I am as a green olive-tree, I truſt in the mercy of God for ever.* No time can make that thrive on which the Lord puts ſo dreadful a mark, as he hath done upon humane confidence, *Jer.* 17. 5. But we may ſee, it was never more diſcernible to the world than at this day; with ſuch a breaking of viſible props, as calls aloud to *ceaſe from man*, and thus be inſtructed, how *men of low degree are vanity, and great men a lye, Pſal.* 62. 9; ſo as to know the alone certainty of that which is, *v.* 7, *In God is my ſalvation, and glory; the rock of my ſtrength and my refuge, is God.* But oh how rare a practice is it in the world, to rowl the burden of an outward intereſt ſo fully on God, as to have the heart at a true repoſe and quiet, when viſible appearances are not.

3 *Principle*, Though nothing be more croſs to the *Politicks* of this age; yet it is clear, *That to court humility is the riſing hand, and the ſureſt way for preventing humbling ſtrokes*, as we ſee, *Mat.* 18.4. And which ſeem ſtrange, though convincingly obvious in all times, that Chriſtians lying near the duſt in a low ſelf-eſteem, and being much on their knees, will keep ſuch more on their feet, than the eager graſpings of others at that ſhadow which flies the more it is followed. *Nam ſic deſcendendo, aſcendendum eſt in via Chriſtiana.*

4 *Principle*, *That the ſureſt mean to have adverſaries gained to be friends, is by having our ways directed to pleaſe God*, *Prov.* 16. 7; and thus endeavour a commending our ſelves to the conſcience of men, but not their humours; for which ſo great an aſſurance is in the Word, with that convincing ſeal from experience, and the remarks of every age, as a Chriſtian can ſolidly reaſon; When I follow my duty, then it is ſure, I follow my intereſt; and in conſulting how to be accepted of God, and give him the preference to all, I keep the ſtraight line to gain both on the conſcience and reſpect of others. I know ſome will object the ſad entertainment

ment *faithfulneſs* gets in the world; and which cannot be denied, how cloſe adherence to the way of God, hath brought many under a dark cloud; but is it not as certainly known with what advantage this hath ſtill brought them out; ſo as their preſent loſs hath brought a double gain, yea found to meet ſuch many days after, even to the conviction of others.

5 *Principle* is this, *That it's more true policy to give to the poor, where no retribution can be looked for, than to give to the rich*, *Prov.* 20. 27; which if deſigned for God, does alſo enſure its return, and compenſation from him. I know nothing ſeems more croſs to reaſon and the rules moſt in ſuch a time walk by; but if the Lord be God, and the Scripture his Word and Teſtimony, there ſhould be no halting here; for to theſe is an expreſs bond given from heaven, and put in regiſter here upon earth, in which he who keepeth truth with men for ever, hath enſured by his *faithfulneſs*, that *what is given to the poor, is lent to the Lord*, and he *will repay it*; and I muſt ſay, none ever took this in earneſt for their ſecurity, and found it fail; but when it

ſeemed to be loſt, and as caſt on the waters, it hath been repaired, with a fourfold more to them or theirs. This I am ſure many are debtors to witneſs; as alſo that no ſuch Bank can be, for the large improvement of a little, and where the Principal will never be loſt. But I muſt further add, in behalf of the *faithfulneſs* of God, what-ever ſeem to anſwer this duty upon the matter, a wrong end and byaſs in ſeeking acceptance with others will marr all, and be as a *dead Fly* in the Box which corrupts the moſt precious Ointment; for how can they put this debt upon the Lord, when that is their reward from man.

6. *Principle, That a publick ſpirit for God, is the beſt expedient for a mans own things, and to ſecure a private intereſt; and the want of this, the cauſe of ſaddeſt loſs oft even upon that account*; this we may ſee, *Hag.* 1. 9; which if there were more of an obſerving Spirit, could be under no miſtake, why many *ſow, and bring in ſo little*, with ſuch perſonal grief, and bitter complainings at home; ſo ſad a fruſtrating of the moſt painful endeavours, by an immediate blowing thereon from heaven; *Why ſaith the Lord*

*Lord of hoſts, becauſe of my houſe that is vaſt, and ye run every man to his own houſe.* One ſaith, ſhall I leave my ſweetneſs? and others, ſhall I leave my fatneſs, to own duty in an evil time, and when viſible hazard attends this? for which I may ſay upon the warrant of the Word, many now put their moſt endeared intereſts to be as a butt of the holy jealouſie and indignation of God.

7 *Principle, It is not duty alone, but a matter of ſelf intereſt, for a Chriſtian to keep cloſe under the authority of the Word, to prevent ſome ſadder yoke; and their being put under that diſcipline of the Rod,* which none can miſs in ſome meaſure for their recovery, where mercy is in their lot; for thus does the Scriptures method lye, and the way to make a ſore and afflicting burthen light that it is by bearing it, and a humble ſubjecting the Soul thereto, with which the ſenſible abatement of its weight will be found, *Heb.* 12. 7. *Jer.* 31. 18. It is evident, how mens rods are taken out of their own ſins, and that it is their wickedneſs is made to correct them; yea, how ſin and the rod grow up together, according to that, *Ezek.* 7, 16. where one growth may be ſeen for both,

both, *Pride buds, and the Rod bloſſometh.*

8 *Principle, That doing for the Lord, and a ſerious reſpect to him in it, is the ſureſt way to prevent labouring in vain, and for enjoying long the work of their hand, Iſa.* 65. 22, 23; from the want of which, what work and labour is loſt, with the ſore toil of many in the external duties of Religion, that will never redound on their account. Oh what an amazing thing is this, were it ſeriouſly conſidered, to ſee men in ſuch earneſt about a counterfeit ſhew, and to appear that which they are not, which ſo certainly leads into a real hell, and wants not ſome beginning here upon the conſcience, yea betrays that very end they propoſe to themſelves within time; for *the bed is ſhorter than that they can ſtretch themſelves upon*; and is rare to find any get into another world, before the vail be taken off them here.

9 *Principle, That a ſerious following the work of the preſent day, is the beſt way to provide for the event of the next, and for ſuch who have but one hope, and all their dependencies on God, to have but one fear, that they go not out of the way*

*way of the promiſe*; this we ſee, *Pſal.*37.3. *Gen.*17.11. And is it not found by continued experience, how making haſte for bringing mens deſign to a deſired iſſue, gains no time of a patient waiting on the Lord? but the want thereof hath put many ſome ſteps backward, when they ſeemed to make the furtheſt advance.

10 *Principle*, That *the way of the Lord is ſtrength to the upright*, *Prov.* 10. 29. And is that alone which can make their feet ſtand in an *even place*, when the world is reeling; this is a truth many have tried, and to this day could never bear another witneſs, but that it gives more in to ſuch as cloſely follow it, than they could either loſe, or give out on that account; yea that where men once find their hand to eſſay duty, though with ſoreſt wreſtlings, when the Lords going before to clear their call is known, then hath their heart and ſtrength been remarkably found to follow.

11 *Principle*, *That to be intereſted in the bleſſing, is that which maketh rich*; and the moſt certain way for attaining ſuch an end beyond all the devices of mens heart which can be tried in another road. I confeſs the faith of ſuch a Truth ſeems to be little

little in the world, and the evidences thereof too obvious to be denied; though thus it is written, and by the faithfulneſs of God enſured to ſuch who will give him credit, that it is his *bleſſing maketh rich, and adds no ſorrow therewith*, Prov. 10.22. But to acquit his way, and certainty of the truth therein, of which one tittle cannot fall to the ground; I offer theſe remarks, with a ſerious appeal to the judgment and diſcerning of the moſt ordinary obſervers, if they do not ſee, 1. That there is an enjoying more in a little, yea a real poſſeſſing ſome have of more than others of the largeſt meaſure: Now it is ſure riches can only be underſtood as it reacheth the end for which by all it is ſought after, ſatisfaction to the mind; and not to have theſe things, but to enjoy them; without which, what is moſt deſirable to the ſenſe, can have no pleaſant taſte. 2. Is it not known ſuch a viſible income by the bleſſing there is, as cauſeth a real ſubſerviency of the little of ſome for the owners uſe, and to go further than the great things of others, ſo as they are made *to abound and have no lack, whilſt theſe who have gathered much, have nothing over*, but in the fulneſs of their ſufficiency are in want. 3. It is ſure,

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in no time this can be hid, how ſomething is above the care of the mind, or labour of mens hand, to croſs or promote an outward intereſt, a falling in and ſurpriſal of ſome Providences, which from no appearance, or the remoteſt tendency of outward cauſes, could in the leaſt be foreſeen, but comes moſt viſibly croſs to the preſent ſcheme and poſture of their affairs, that in one day is found to undo more than many years had ſet up. 4. In this I need but appeal to mens eyes, as well as to their reaſon, if the pretended riches of many who unqueſtionably have a great ſhare of outward things, be not a falſe cover under which the world may ſee what anxiety, trouble, fear, and moſt bitter complainings are, and how rare ſuch an inſtance is, to whom riches is given in their haſtening out of the way of the bleſſing, and not a large meaſure of ſorrow added; ſo as it is really no ſuch thing that moſt have, but a Serpent inſtead of bread, where the ſting is more ſharp than the honey ſweet; it is as the husk, when the ſubſtance thereof may be oft found in the houſe of the poor more than in theirs. Oh what a miſtaken thing is this, that with ſuch eagerneſs is graſped after, if there

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were more of the true uſe of reaſon, when it is ſo certainly known that ſomething there is above outward cauſes to imbitter the moſt plentiful lot, and take the uſe thereof from ſome, and its comfortable uſe from others, whilſt it is no leſs clear, the true joy and ſatisfaction of many in their lot, yea what a ſun-ſhine the bleſſing cauſeth ſuch live under, on whom the world did never ſeem to ſmile; and what does this mean? is it not to ſhew the performance of that Scripture, which in no time can fall to the ground, *That the bleſſing of God maketh rich, and adds no ſorrow therewith.*

12. I ſhall but add one *Principle* more of that excellent Wiſdom given in the Scripture, for mens being wiſe to themſelves, by their following duty, *How it is the intereſt of State, and beyond all theſe Politicks, or* Arcana Imperii, *for its preſervation*, which ſeems moſt infallible to many, *to ſeek the promoting of truth and godlineſs*; for if theſe ſhould wear out, and go away, the Land cannot poſſibly be ſafe where once they had an abode. I know, to mention this in ſuch an age may ſeem for no other advantage, but to expoſe theſe Truths to the deriſion of ſuch who

who know no intereſt the Bible or its Rules can have in the management of ſtate affairs, yea look on theſe who are in any meaſure ſerious to live up to the truth and principles they profeſs, as the ſoreſt grievance of the place they live in; ſo ſad a requital muſt ſuch often meet with, who I may ſay, next to the long-ſuffering of God, are the greateſt means to prevent their Countries ruine; but it is ſure, this ſame reaſon ſtands good, which *Eſther* made uſe of, *Chap.* 7.4. if *theſe periſh*, and the *truth be ſold*, though with the greateſt price of appearing advantage, and that all ſhould hold their peace, yet could it not *countervail the Kings damage*, and ſo inevitable a ruine to the publick intereſt of the ſtate which muſt follow thereon; for theſe are clear: 1. Whatever reacheth a ſtroke to truth and practical godlineſs amongſt men, it doth the ſame to the greateſt ſecurity of Government, and that which founds the ſtrongeſt obligations to any Civil and Moral Duties. 2. Is it not manifeſt if theſe wear out and be depreſſed in a Nation, moral righteouſneſs and truth amongſt men will quickly follow, and the greateſt ſecurity for all perſonal intereſt is

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ſo far gone? 3. And is it not obvious to reaſon how the ſame eſſays to depreſs truth and practical godlineſs in a place, muſt help Atheiſm and a prophane Spirit to get up, which hath ſo direct and native a tendencie to weaken the Politick body, and emaſculate the ſpirits of men to obſtruct the vigorous improvement of natural parts; yea, moſt remarkably does depreſs and change the very *Genius* of ſuch a people. It is true in ſuch parts where the truth of religion had not come, none will deny what ſingular advantage there hath been both of Natural and Moral endowments, as of old in *Greece* and amongſt the *Romans*. But from no Records of times paſt could this ever be ſeen, that theſe were found with the departing of the truth from a place after its being profeſſed and owned there; for which how ſad a witneſs is a great part of the world this day, where it may be ſeen, the darkeſt night of Barbariſm and Immorality hath befallen theſe places in a ſpecial manner, where the light of the Goſpel once ſhined, as much of *Africk*, and where theſe once famous *Aſiatick* Churches were does evidence. 4. Can there one inſtance be given, of a Nation's proſpering, that oppo-

oppoſed and ſought a depreſſing of the Truth where it had once been received; but this all may ſee, who are ſerious to obſerve, how the moſt remarkable ruining ſtrokes that have come upon a place have had ſome viſible falling off, and withſtanding of the Truth to go before; for then Will it not be with ſuch a people as in former times to brook that peace which had been formerly known there before the light ſhining amongſt them? but the Scripture makes it clear, that the *red and pale horſe*, and he whoſe work is to take peace from the earth, does immediately follow a rejecting of the Truth. It is known what a flood of Judgments did fall in after ſo great a growth of *Arrianiſm*, and that height which it came to, not only by ſeduction but perſecution. And can it be forgot what did ſo immediately precede theſe deſolating ſtrokes on the *German* Empire, which was upon ſo remarkable a violence and depreſſing of the Truth in *Bohemia*, and other places there.

*Sect.* 5. This peculiar *Improvement* might Chriſtians make of the preſent ſubject, with ſuch clear diſcoveries of the continued verification of the Word; To *have ſome further reach and diſcerning of things*

*to come, and what yet is before the Churches hand*, than what moſt ſatisfie themſelves with. A Truth in which is to be underſtood no following after ſecret things, which in the deep Counſels of God are ſhut up from men; nor is it to know times and ſeaſons, and purſue a wiſdom above that which is written, which were to invade his Prerogative, to whom alone this belongs to know things contingent with their proper Circumſtances,& foreſee them falling out when no poſſible tendence of ſecond Cauſes can be alledged thereto; for Divine Revelation is the alone Rule and Meaſure of our knowleg, and the bounds ſet by the Lord, beyond which there muſt be no more ſearch: Yet is it clear, that a concerning Uſe and Improvement of the Scripture lies here, and ſome part of the Chriſtians work to conſider the truth of its accompliſhment, as it looks forward to future events as well as for things paſt. We can blame our ſelves only that we live not in a more clear and comfortable view of things to come when ſo much advantage is for this: yea, we ſee how the Scripture ſpeaks of things there as already paſt, to witneſs not only the

the certainty of their performance, but that ſuch a converſe we ſhould ſeek after by ſeeing them in the Word, as if they were preſent in an actual exiſtence before us? therefore is it thus expreſſed, *Rev.* 18. 2. *Babylon is fallen.* But for clearing of ſuch a duty in ſo dark an hour on the Church, I ſhall lay down theſe three Particulars to be conſidered. 1. What ſolid grounds there are to point out our way here, and let Chriſtians ſee what length they might come by Scripture-light, and without extraordinary Revelation for a clear and comfortable diſcerning of ſome future events, which at this day are upon a certain approach. 2.. This alſo muſt be taken along with the former, what reſtraining bounds the Lord hath ſet, beyond which there muſt be no further ſearch. 3. I ſhall offer a ſhort touch at ſome Particulars in ſo very dark and aſtoniſhing a time as this, to witneſs how clear and refreſhing a look might be had of ſome great things to come as if they were now preſent before us, by getting up to that Watch-tower of a near converſe with God in the Word.

For the Firſt, it is certain no Veſſel at Sea keeps more exactly by the Card and

Compaſs, than the Church-Militant does by the written Word which ſtands open at all times for us to conſult how her courſe lies and keeps her way, and how well the croſſeſt winds fall in with her motion.

2. Though extraordinary ways of revealing Gods mind are now ceaſed, yet are they ſtill the ſame in the Scripture as to the ſubſtance thereof, to which as a great height a Chriſtian may get up in a ſerious enquiry after the Truth, ſo as not only to diſcern preſent duty but things in their approach when at a diſtance, which the Word is yet to bring forth, without any thing of that *Lumen Propheticum*, which in former times was known.

3. Is it not clear, how in the Scripture there is a perfect *Idea* and comprehenſion of all theſe viciſſitudes and changes which are to go over the Churches Head here, in what deſigns the Lord hath upon the after-Ages of the world; ſo as thus her fate and deſtiny is brought to light? yea, is there not in the Scripture this day a ſtanding Record of the ancient Judgments of the Lord, where men may ſee the Copy and Preſidents of his Providence for after-times of the Church ſet in their ſight? 4.

4. As it cannot be denied what extraordinary diſcoveries ſome in theſe laſt times have had of future things, and remarkable exigences of the Church, whoſe eminent holineſs and ſobriety made it the more convincing to others: yet even there did the General Rule of the Word ſtill go along with them, and had no new things revealed but what was contained there, though carried therein by a ſingular impulſe of a Scripture-Spirit to apply the Rule to particular Caſes and Perſons; but this are we not to look after, nor is there cauſe when ſo much in an ordinary way may be known by a humble, ſerious inquiry after the Counſels of God in his Word.

5. Is it not clear how *Daniel* underſtood by Books, what yet was to come of that full accompliſhment of the deſolation of *Jeruſalem*, and the years thereof by what he found in that Prophecie of *Jeremiah*, *Dan.* 9. 2. where we may ſee him there on the ſame ſcent (whatever otherways he had of an extraordinary ſpirit) for diſcerning things to come by this ſure way of ſetting the Word and Event together; for which though there needs a ſpecial irradiation of the mind and a

*Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation*, *Epheſ.* 1. 17. Yet is that ſuch as in an ordinary way ſhould be ſought by every one of the Saints: But oh! we ſtand as it were upon the flat and low ground, and know little what a being more abſtract and ſeparate for ſuch an end is, and have a near converſe with God in that great ſtudy of his Word and Works in the world; and therefore is ſo little known how great a length Chriſtians might reach in the way of ordinary gifts and means to know the deep things of God, and what lies hid from the eyes of moſt though written forth before us in the Word.

6. That ſpecial care the Mediator hath for his Church and People that no ſad trial and viciſſitudes are to fall out, but the Word is ſuited to give warning thereof before-hand: nor is there ſuch a ſtroke whether on a nation or a man, but the cauſe thereof may be clearly found in the Word if there were more ſerious converſe with it: men need not be at ſuch work as ſome are in ſearching out the fatality and periods of Kingdoms and States to trouble themſelves with the intricate numbers of *Plato* and predictions of *Aſtrologers*, when ſo clear a reſponſe from theſe infallible Oracles

racles may be had, & by a ſerious enquiry there, comparing the Word with the continued courſe and conduct of Providence in all Ages of the Church ſome ſolid ground to ſee that reſpect general denunciations of judgments to particular times, yea, from a national ſinning & falling off from God foreſee the certainty of national judgments.

7. Is not ſuch an unchangeable *ſeries* and order of things in the Scripture as may cauſe a ſafe arguing from the Cauſes to to the Effects: for though conditional Threatnings be not declarative of the eternal purpoſe of God about the event, but are moral Legiſlative acts; yet is it clear they expreſs an undoubted connexion betwixt ſin and the puniſhment thereof, that at *what inſtant the Lord ſpeaks againſt a Nation and Kingdom to pluck up, root out and deſtroy*, as we ſee *Jer.* 17. 8. if the condition be not interpoſed of repentance and turning to God, then is it infallibly ſure and obvious though outward appearances ſeem'd never ſo croſs, that ſuch a ſentence will not fall to the ground.

8. Thus alſo may we diſcern the Churches Riſing and Cure to be ſo far begun, as evidences of a through humbling

work under her ſtroke are manifeſt, when ſuch are made to *come with weeping*, and a power therewith to wreſtle, who before lookt as a people bound under ſuch Bonds as they could not ſhake off: then may we know it is a *Criſis* tending to life, *Jer.* 13. 19. and ſome previous ſtir and motion amongſt the *dry bones* before they get to their feet.

9. There is ſolid ground whence at a diſtance it may be ſeen, what manner of judgment may be feared, ſince the Word does ſo particularly circumſtantiate this That *a Sword ſhall be ſent from the Lord to avenge the quarrel of his Covenant*, *Lev.* 26. 25.

10. It is clear alſo the time and near approach of judgment, may ſo far be ſeen from the Word by a diſcernible ripeneſs & height, that a Peoples ſin is come to in ſome prodigious acts of wickedneſs; and when no acceſs the Word hath to reprove, when the Judg oppreſſeth and *asketh for a reward*, *and the people love to have it ſo*, which ſhews the fields becoming very white for judgment to put in the Sickle.

11. Such as enquire ſeriouſly at the Word, may find cauſe to diſcern the wearing out of a Houſe and Family, and

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of conſuming ſtrokes to come on their off-ſpring that have been remarkably given over to the ſin of uncleanneſs; for ſuch a ſentence is given forth from him againſt that ſin whoſe Word never fell to the ground, *They ſhall commit whoredome, but ſhall not increaſe*, Hoſ. 4. 10.

12. I ſhall only add this how eaſie it may be to diſcern ſome humbling ſtroke near, and undoubtedly to follow, whether on a Nation or a Man, where ſwelling pride and inſolence goes before; for this is a ſure application of the General Rule, *Prov.* 11. 2. *When pride cometh then cometh ſhame.* And *Chap.* 16. That this goeth before deſtruction.

In the ſecond place, let us conſider theſe reſtricting bounds that the holy God hath ſet to his peoples enquiries, that there be no over-ſtretching the Rule, or a going further than the clear light of the Word goes before them, which I ſhall here particularly touch. 1. We may purſue no *wiſdom above that which is written*, nor ſo much as look into that Ark of the hid things of God, which he hath ſhut up: It is ſure there is large enough room and bounds in the Bible to arreſt the moſt unſober ſpirit, and give them

them work there. 2. The Soveraignty of God and an awful impreſſion of this on the ſoul muſt ſtill bound the Chriſtians furtheſt enquiry; ſince it's clear, he ſo walks by Rule as his Prerogative alſo takes place, wch theſe marvellous ſurpriſals of grace have oft witneſſed in meeting thus a people at their greateſt diſadvantage; for who could have infer'd ſuch a Conſequent from theſe Premiſes, *Iſa.* 59. 17. *For the iniquity of their Covetouſneſs I ſmote them, and hid my ſelf, and they went on frowardly in the way of their heart.* Now ſhould not judgment inevitably follow according to the Rule? nay, ſaith the Lord, who is Sovereign, and in his way infinitely above our thoughts, I'll anſwer all with one Cure; *I have ſeen their ways, and will heal them.* 3. Whatever length is to be reached in the diſcerning future events by the Word; yet here muſt all keep a due diſtance, *Acts* 1. 7. that it is not ours *to know the times and ſeaſons which the Lord hath reſerved to himſelf*, as to any peremptory determining in ſuch a caſe; though it is clear alſo that with a ſafe warrant we may enquire about the ſeaſon and near approach of Scripture-Predictions, ſo fa ras previous ſigns thereof are by the

the Word given for ſuch an end. 4. It is here the Lord hath ſet bounds as to the way, mean, or particular circumſtantiating of Events beyond what is expreſly written and made clear from Scripture-light. The matters of God are rolled on inviſible *wheels*, whoſe motion gets oft out of our ſight, and riſeth ſo far above humane reach, that men can find nothing after him ſo as to reſtrict the glorious God from one ſtep in his way to the ſame method and circumſtances in another piece of his work. Thus the Scripture ſhews, *How darkneſs is under his feet*, and *thick clouds round about*, even when he comes to deliver his people. 5. Theſe bounds muſt all our enquiries have, that they be in order to duty, and lead to ſome practical improvement for the work of our day; for thus were the men of *Iſſachar*, wiſe *to diſcern the times*, not to anſwer their own humour, but that they might *know what Iſrael ought to do*. The *prudent foreſeeth the evil and hides himſelf*, and this ſolid uſe and advantage ſhould be lookt to in diſcerning what the Lord is about to do; that Chriſtians may know what to pray for what to expect; that their heart may go alongſt with theſe ends the Lord is now

now bringing forth: And is not here matter of ſerious exerciſe in a day when the hearts of the godly are ſo low, as their ſpirits ſeem to fail, and be ready to ſay, *our bones are dried, our hope is paſt, and we are cut off*, Ezek. 37. 7. to know what aſpect the written Word hath on a ſinking Church. I love no overſtretching our Hope, but it is ſtrange there is not more improving the Scripture for our comfort againſt preſent appearances, from ſuch clear demonſtrative evidences we have there, of things to come; and what ſhall be *the end of theſe Wonders*, whereon we now look with ſuch amazement.

Theſe things being premiſed, to prevent miſtakes about this ſubject, I ſhall adventure in following Scripture light with ſome awful regard to theſe bounds the Lord hath ſet to our enquiries here, to touch this in a few words more particularly, as not unſeaſonable in a time when many are at work to kindle a light unto themſelves, and walk in the ſparks thereof; and ſo woful a trade of divination hath got up in the world, that men will go to *the God of Ekron*, by ſeeking an Divinity either in the Stars above, or from the Powers of darkneſs below, as though there

were no God in *Iſrael*, or ſuch a thing as his written Oracles to enquire at: But *if Lord be God let us follow him*; and if the Scripture be his undoubted Word, I muſt ſay none need be in the dark about things to come; as to what is bringing forth for the Church in the great event of theſe laſt times, when this bleſſed Record is ſo near, which came down from Heaven with a fulneſs of light unto men, for all that concerns them to know here, and now with ſo clear and certain a ſound ſpeaks.

1. From what point the Churches motion unto this day lies, ſince Antichriſts hight and reign we know is over with the great Apoſtacy of the Church expreſly foretold under the New Teſtament; for thus by keeping ſight thereof, and more near converſe with the Word in every ſtep, and turn of her way, it might be eaſie to diſcern though at midnight, the certainty of her courſe, and how exactly it keeps with the Card and Compaſs, where a full Map of her Journey and paſſage, through time is held forth; yea how far ſhe hath got by the moſt hazardous part in her whole paſſage; and now ſeems near to a falling under the favourable a-

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ſpect of ſome moſt remarkable Promiſes in her behalf; thus alſo is there ſolid ground to expect one of the greateſt Conjunctions that was ever known to the Church, is not only to come but on ſome near approach, I mean of *Promiſes* which from former Ages have been ſealed up, with their performance, of the prayers of the Saints, that long have waited before the Throne, and their full return, yea, of ſome very eminent Providences for making theſe effectual.

2. This from the Word, we may with clear evidence know what ever appearances ſeem to contradict, That *a ſad hour of temptation is coming on the world*, and on theſe whoſe work hath been to trouble the Church; where this clear ground is that the faithfulneſs of God ſtands good, to put a *Cup of poiſon and trembling in the hand of her Afflicters*, *Iſa.* 51. 22, 23. and cauſe ſuch *wring out the dregs of that Cup the Churches have drunk of*, Pſal. 75. 8. Nor hath it ever bin found that Judgment begun at the Houſe of God and ſtayed there, or that the Nations were a ſore rod in his hand upon his people, but a judgment on theſe quickly followed, to ſhew forth the righteouſneſs of the Lord in recompencing

pencing tribulation to ſuch for what they have done; and make way by a day of vengeance for the year of his Redeemed to come.

3. This we may diſcern from the Word, by comparing the times and preſent ſtate of the Church therewith, that a work of judgment ſeems yet to go before her further riſing, and theſe ſore pangs and throws in the birth are not paſt, that moſt immediately are found to make way for approaching mercies; the *Scripture-grounds* are theſe. 1. The method of Providence, that with every ſtep of the Churches exaltation ſome previous down-caſting hath ſtill keeped proportion thereto: Nor is it found through the Scripture where any great thing the Lord hath done for his Church, but a remarkable hight of trouble hath gone before; but is here any thing ſtrange or matter of heſitation, where the light of the Word goes ſo clearly before; that when one of the greateſt events in behalf of the Church ſince the Meſſias came into the world, until his ſecond coming in the full deſtruction of Antichriſt, is in bringing forth a time of trouble and diſmal darkneſs beyond what former ages have known

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go before ſuch a brightneſs. 2*d. Ground*, Is it not too manifeſt ſuch evils now follow the reformed Churches, that it may be ſaid in no time was it ever known, the Lord paſſing ſuch by without ſome viſible mark of his anger put thereon; There needs no inſtancing of theſe, where the diſcoverie is ſo manifeſt. A 3*d. Ground* is this, that we have ſeen judgment begun, but no ſeen fruit thereof, ſtrokes treading on the heels of other, yet do not reclaim. And is it not a Scripture-Inference, when a people will not be reformed, they lie near a further ſtroke, yeais to be feared that which comes with a cure, may be very ſore ere it hath done its work. *O who ſhall live when God does this!* Can we be in the dark after all that is ſeen this day what is coming, for ſuch clear preſages are at ſome times of a future event, as it may be ſaid what *Amos* ſhews, *c.* 3.8. *The Lord God hath ſpoken, who can but prophecy?* we can diſcern the face of the skie; But oh how ſtrange is it when ſpiritual judgments have gone the length almoſt of wearing out the Churches, (which muſt yet have a recovery) that a ſound of outward Judgment is not more continually in our ear! Is it time to be found lying in the hatches of the Ship aſleep when

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ſuch unuſual preſages are before us. I may not in the leaſt queſtion where the Scripture is ſo clear; that great brightneſs which yet waits on the Church; to which all her trouble muſt make way; and that the time of the killing of the witneſs, and their propheſying in ſackcloth is now paſt; yet there true is cauſe for fear of ſome unuſually ſharp and ſearching trial, and that *ultima clades* on the reformed Church, is yet to come, that may cauſe much ſhaking where there is not a through eſtabliſhment in the Truth.

4. What-ever height the Churches trouble come at, yet have we ſolid ground for this, it ſhall not be long, nor ſuch a lying ſtorm as in former ages; but we know the adverſaries wrath, though great, is now bounded to a ſhort time in theſe latter days; and that the brightneſs of the light of the Goſpel does much ripen the harveſt, for judgment to put in the ſickle: Yea, though ſad and very dark intervals muſt fall in, yet is it clear, the great work and intent of Providence in this time is, to put forward the Churches intereſt, make way for its enlargment, and bring her begun and growing victory over Antichriſt to a more full peri-

od, as is enſured, *Rev.* 10. 7. *ch.* 12. 12.

5. It is no conjectural event; but ſuch with greateſt aſſurance we muſt believe, that there is a ſecond riſing the reformed Churches ſhall yet have in the power and ſpirituality of Religion; where an immediate appearance of the Lord ſhall be no leſs ſeen, than in that firſt and marvelous recovery of the purity thereof, which for many ages had been over-clouded: The grounds are; 1. So remarkable an oppoſition as at this day is thereto in the world, over which the Mediator muſt prevail, and have the deciſion of that ſtrife on his ſide. 2. If it be ſure the Churches ſhall yet recover and riſe; muſt not the cure be where the ruin and wearing out hath been moſt evident: And ſuch a bleſſed return of the Sun, as will bring heat and love therewith, to be more anſwerable to their light? 3. Without this the truth of many Promiſes yet to be fulfilled, could not be underſtood in the event, which ſo expreſly point at ſuch flouriſhing times of the Church, as ſhall have a more bright and hot Sun-ſhine of the power of the Goſpel, and pouring out of the Spirit therewith; ſo as *the name of that place ſhall be called Jehovah Shammach, the Lord is there, Ezek.* 48. 35.

6. Though

6. Though nothing ſeem more croſs to outward appearances, yet is it ſure, as the Lord is true, whoſe word is paſſed thereon; That whoſoever have engaged their power to ſupport the *Romiſh* Intereſt, and heal that deadly wound it hath got by the Goſpel, ſhall loſe the day, and find their cauſe deſperate: for the iſſue of this war is determined and ſure, the party with whom theſe contend is Jeſus Chriſt, he who was ſhewed *John*, *Rev.* 19. 13, with his Veſture dipped in blood, whoſe name is called the *Word of God*, and hath the Armies of heaven to follow him; yea by many degrees of wrath hath his deſign already taken place; which can be under no debate, when the Lord hath begun, but that he will alſo make an end, and no retrogade ſteps are in his way, as is clearly enſured, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10. *Rev.* 13. 10. *ch.* 17. 14. Nor is there cauſe to be ſtaggered in the faith of the approach of *Romes* fatal period, though we ſhould live to ſee *Brittain* and the Churches abroad on a ſudden over-run by the rage of that beaſt; and her light eclipſed by the *Romiſh* darkneſs; but to look thereon according to the Scripture, as the *ultimus conatus* of that wounded adverſary; which would

be found to have an immediate connexion with the ruin of Antichriſt, and with the reviving and following glory of the Church; for *ſtrong is the Lord God who judgeth her*, *Rev.* 18. 8.

7. This alſo on ſolid ground from the Word, we are called to believe, that no new aſſault by Antichriſt and his followers can be this day againſt the Church, but muſt help to put her intereſt forward, and be for the furtherance of the Goſpel; ſince it is clear, that by a continued war betwixt the Lamb and Antichriſt, is every ſtep of the Churches riſe advanced; which were it ſeriouſly conſidered, the moſt formidable appearances of trouble from that party, ſhould with more comfort than fear be looked on. Yea, is not here from the Lord ſome part of his peoples mercy, that they go not out in haſte, nor get a haſty delivery, but ſuch as one ſtep thereof may ſtill fit and diſpoſe for another.

8. It can be no conjectural event, where the Scripture is ſo clear, of ſome very immediate appearance of the Lord, by making bare his arm againſt this adverſary; that will be ſuch as hath not been ſeen in former deliveries of the Church,

Church, ſince the day he made his power known at the Red Sea; for thus in Scripture is it held forth as a type thereof: Therefore ſhall the *Song of Moſes be ſung*; though not of *Moſes* only, but *of the Lamb*, as importing ſomething more glorious, and ſome greater brightneſs put on this, which is the moſt illuſtrious act of divine judgment, reſerved to the laſt times, and upon the greateſt adverſary that ever Jeſus Chriſt had upon the earth. It is true, The Churches help lies now hid, and in ambuſh, *Rev.* 1. 8. *I ſaw by night, and behold a man on a red horſe*; and where was this? it was *amongſt the mirtle trees that were in the bottom*, which lay not in the worlds view; but then was the earth *ſitting ſtill*, and *at reſt*, as we ſee *v.* 11. whilſt the Mediator hath his forces prepared, and is ordering and acting forth inſtruments for his peoples delivery; but at laſt will make it known, that when he comes it is not too late with help.

9. That time muſt aſſuredly come, when a remarkable ſtirring up, and raiſing of ſpirits ſhall be, to build the houſe of the Lord, and be ſubſervient to his deſign of Judgment againſt Antichriſt; though ſuch in which nothing of inſtruments ſhall obſcure

the brightneſs of his appearance, but bear a convincing witneſs thereto. It is clear, there hath been no great piece of ſervice for the Church, but ſome remarkable raiſing of inſtruments hath been previous thereto, ſee *Ezra.* 1. 5. *Hag.* 1. 14. And for what is to come, is not the Word moſt expreſs, *Rev.* 14. 5. That ſuch under the Mediators conduct are making ready, who are *choſen and faithful*; yea which muſt take place, That ſome of the Kings of the earth, even ſuch whoſe forefathers had given their power to uphold the *Romiſh* Throne, ſhall ſo effectually concur to execute that Judgment written againſt that adverſary.

10. Though we are to believe, that many ſhall be reſcued by grace from that *Romiſh* darkneſs; yet is there undoubted certainty for this, for which the Word is gone out of the mouth of the Lord, That he will never have peace with that Party and Kingdom; and no poſſible treaty or reconcilement can be therewith, until the blood of the Saints which they have ſhed be avenged; for with this adverſary hath the Mediator declared war from generation to generation; who with the great *Anathema* is accurſed to the ſecond coming of the Lord; yea is judicially ſecluded

cluded from Repentance, *Rev.*16.9, *And they blaſphemed him who had power over theſe plagues, and repented not.*

This alſo is clear, what-ever preſent appearances now ſpeak, That aſſuredly the day haſtens, and will come, wherein the Lord ſhall roll away the reproach of his Church before all the Nations, and cauſe her riſing and brightneſs anſwer the furtheſt meaſure of her abaſement, and her enemies be found liars unto her, in their prædictions as well as reproach; which though at this day is marvelous, how it can be effectuate; the Promiſe will make way for it ſelf through all theſe difficulties.

*Sect. 6.* This peculiar *uſe* might Chriſtians make of ſuch a ſubject, and that certainty by the experience of the verification of the Word on their Soul; *to be more fixed in the truth, againſt error and the ſubtil aſſaults thereof*; when from a practical acquaintance with theſe Truths which others impugn, they can with the furtheſt perſwaſion of heart put their ſeal to the ſame; and have an argument from within, which all the world cannot anſwer. How many ſcoff at aſſurance of ſalvation, the

inward witneſs of the Spirit, yea at the Doctrine of Imputed Righteouſneſs, who never knew the ſure and ſenſible effects thereof on their Soul; but there the judicial riſe and pedegree of error may be ſeen, 2 *Theſ.* 2.10, *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth, &c.* It is not ſtrange, to ſee what liberty ſome of this generation take, to ſport their wit and invention about the Scripture, who know not theſe near approaches of God there, in the verification of his Word; nor how clear and convincing a witneſs there is from the experience of Chriſtians, in ſo much, that if moſt within the Church ſhould deny the truth of a divine efficacious concurrence with the Word, beyond what is objective & moral; thoſe could not but put their ſeal thereto, yea how natures light can be no teſt and meaſure of ſupernatural Revelation; from what they certainly know, and have proved of the certainty of theſe truths, which are above all reaſon to comprehend, though not contrary thereto. Thus they know how little their own activity and beſtirring themſelves could do, without a ſupernatural influence; and that to will as well as to do muſt be given them, for which they are not ſufficient of themſelves. And what a

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ſad miſtake is it of true liberty, to have this lye in an equal indifference to good and evil; can that be any begun part of the perfect liberty which is in heaven, or is that the liberty which is attained by a Chriſtians further growth in ſanctification, that brings therewith a further diſtance and abhorrency of ſin; yet none will deny this is a more near approach to that ſtate of the Saints above, where alone true and perfect liberty is. Thus from ſure experience alſo, Chriſtians can witneſs againſt theſe who deny a ſtanding Miniſtry, and revile ſo divine a Ordinance, (which is one of the moſt peculiar engines of the Devil, he makes uſe of againſt the Truth), that they know Chriſts ſpeaking in them, and workingby them with a moſt diſcernable authority and power in the ſerious following their Maſters work; yea how by the Doctrine of the Church, which meets with ſo much contradiction everywhere; they can aſſuredly ſay they *received the Spirit*, and knows it to be the Spirit of holineſs which does in all correſpond with the Written Word.

*Sect.* 7. This ſpecial *Improvement* may be obvious, which the preſent ſubject, were

were it rightly considered, leads necessarily into, to *have our spirits thus fixed in a more full assurance of the Doctrine and Principles of the Reformed Church*, as they stand in opposition to Popery; upon these grounds.

1. That it is so evident, what most effectually tends to clear up the Truth and *Divinity of the Scripture*; does inevitably strike at the root and foundation of that Interest; since this cannot be in the dark, except we quit the use of reason, That the greatest Controversie betwixt us and the *Romish* Church, where the true state of the question lies, is here, if the Scripture contained in the Old and New Testament be of Divine Authority; or whether it and the *Romish* Bible, which is Tradition, and the infallible dictates of their Church, be the Rule and Foundation of Faith? according to which decision it is most clear, their cause stands or falls; which is in effect upon the greatest head of Atheism, for if the Scripture be not the sufficient and sure *basis* of the Christian Faith, all may see it can have none, whatever alledged, but what is from Reason demonstrable to be a notorious falshood, and the Christian cause lost. I know this

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may ſeem too great a challenge, whilſt they do not profeſſedly diſown that Divine Record; but what a mock homage is here? And is it not thus worſe uſed, with a more inſufferable indignity put thereon, than the moſt avowed Atheiſts could do; to put out its eyes, as the *Philiſtims* did *Sampſons*, and then bring it forth to make ſport before the World, which is indeed their greateſt enemy, and plague; though they are not aware, that it will undo their mirth, and at laſt pull down the houſe above them. Can the truth of this be denied? Yea, how with the higheſt contempt and deriſion they deal with the Scripture; as ſuch who would take a Sovereign Judg, whoſe Authority uſed to be venerable to all, and put a Servant upon the Bench above him; whileſt he muſt not only ſit in a lower place, but have it declared to the World, that none regard what he ſays, ſince to them he can ſpeak no intelligible ſence; nor hath any deciſive power, or Authority more than the meaneſt of the people, but what is from them alone: Now, is not this to declare him no Judg, but a dead Image ſet up for ſport, with much more Indignity than to thruſt him

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out of doors. I confeſs they have taken a ſure way to end all diſputes, nor needs any more contending about particular truths of the words, or to cite its Authority; when theſe are their known and profeſſed Principles. 1. That the Church of *Rome* can make that Scripture, and to be authoritatively binding to their Conſcience, which was never writ in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*; ſo as they have ſuch a large ground to go upon, that nothing poſſible can put them to a ſtrait. 2. That the Scripture it ſelf hath no deciſive voice, until theirs precede; nor any Authority, but what is precarious, and dependent on them. 3. That to go in unto this bleſſed Record, and ſeek the Counſel of God there, is but to conſult a maſs of dead unſenſed Characters; that can have no intelligible ſound, nor articulat voice, until the Romiſh Clergy cauſe it ſpeak, and put a ſence thereon: And thus is the letter of the Scripture undeniably paſſed from and no other Bible but their ſenſe and meaning. 4. That there is no founding the Chriſtian Faith on any certainty of Divine Truth in the Scripture, nor on that ground, *Thus ſaith the Lord*: But, Thus do their Church ſay, and the Pope as ſupream Head thereof.

of. 5. That the very Being of God, the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, muſt have a dependence on the Church ere they can be Articles of our Faith, and be believed. It is ſure, there is no acceſs to deny that theſe are Romiſh Principles, which they muſt either own, or impeach their greateſt Writers of falſhood, who ſo expreſly maintain the ſame; but if theſe hold, it may then be ſaid their work is done, and are got out of all poſſible reach of Proteſtant Arguments, with this one Anſwer; You have no *Bible*, or any thing to prove your Religion, but what you muſt have from us: So as the great work of the reformed Churches this day is to appear for the Truth of Chriſtianity, and that ſuch an authentick, and ſacred Inſtrument of Truth, certainly is, whereon it is founded.

2. This *advantage* is for being more throughly fixed in the Truth againſt Popery, from theſe clear diſcoveries of the Scriptures accompliſhment, and what near converſe is to be had therewith by experience; That thus it is ſure, the Scripture can be known with the greateſt Certainty of evidence to be the Word of God, without all dependance on the Church. Which makes void one of their greateſt Fundamentals,

mentals, that none can be assured thereof, but by the Churches testimony. It cannot be denyed, that the whole frame and structure of the Romish Church; with that appearance it hath this day, is a singular help to confirm the truth, where all may see these Propheſies that concern The Antichrist, under the *New Testament* so visibly fulfilled: But I hope that gives no ground for a necessity on us to take the Truth of the Scripture implicitely off their hand; and I am sure there is none else.

3. This *advantage* there is from the present subject, for being more solidly fixed in the Truth against Popery; That we can thus know, and keep sight of the state of the reformed Church, and the whole *series* of Providence about her in the most remarkable changes she hath been under; both during Antichrists, and since she begun her rise: where it is so evident, how exactly all answers to the Word, and that her case hath not been more low, afflicted, and latent, than is there held forth; and how certainly the Lord hath performed his Truth, in what length hitherto his work about her hath come.

4. Is it not thus, by the clear evidence of the Scriptures accomplish ment, and a serious

ſerious converſe therewith, we may ſee the certainty of Antichriſtianiſm in the World (which as an event of the Word behoved to take place under the *New Teſtament*) how convincingly it is verified in the Doctrine of the Romiſh Church; ſuch as allwho are in earneſt ſo far as to compare this with the Written Word may know how not only different from the Truth of Chriſtianity revealed there it is, but moſt viſibly deſtructive thereto; as this day hath been fully cleared before the world by the labours of ſuch, who ſince the breaking up of the Light, were helped of the Lord to contend againſt this adverſary. And now, ſince Atheiſm and Popery do ſo viſibly make way for other; and ſuch clear acceſs is this day to diſcern Antichriſt (in whom the Scripture hath ſo great a Seal to its Truth) by the profeſſed Doctrine of that Church; I ſhall ſhut up this Diſcourſe, with ſome touch thereat, in as few words as the Truth with plainneſs may be expreſſed, in the following *Appendix*.

# AN APPENDIX,

*In which a ſhort and plain account is given of the Romiſh Doctrines, in their direct oppoſition to Scripture and the truth of Chriſtianity.*

## SECT. I.

*Qu.* SInce mens greateſt intereſt here is to know the Truth and Certainty of that Religion they profeſs; What is to be underſtood by the Proteſtant Reformed Religion, as under ſuch a deſignation it is now held forth? *Anſw.* If we conſult the Scripture of God, unto whoſe tryal this offers it ſelf, it may be eaſie to know, That it is no new Doctrine brought in upon the world; but the Truth of Chriſtianity, by the good hand of the Lord on the Reformed Churches, confeſſed, aſſerted, and purged from the corruptions of Popery, and hath the very ſame grounds to prove it, which the Chriſtian Religion hath. *Qu.* Can this be clearly demonſtrated, when it is ſo ſhort a time ſince the name of Proteſtant, much leſs as a Church was known; and viſible appearances

ſeem to bring in queſtion the Truth of its being, and ſucceſſion; when Popery for many ages had a conſpicuous, and flouriſhing ſtate? *Anſw.* We deny not the *Reformation* to be late, and that name of *Proteſtant*, which had its riſe from a ſolemn proteſtation of ſeveral Princes, and Cities, againſt the Popiſh Doctrine and Power; but theſe alſo are moſt clear. 1. That it is the ſame Truth and Religion of the Apoſtles, and Primitive Church for divers ages wherein they walked; though in a great meaſure after corrupted, and darkened as Antichriſtianiſm grew up, which hath been unanſwerably proved to the World. 2. That in the whole Scripture, no ground can be ſhewed for a continued viſibility of the Church, as an unite Body, and in a flouriſhing outward ſtate; but we find the contrary expreſly foretold, how obſcure and low her condition ſhould be during Antichriſts reign: So as a *place of hiding* was then prepared for her. 3. Yet is it demonſtrable, how there did not want, even in theſe darkeſt times, ſome viſibility of the true Church by a continued ſucceſſion of witneſſes who appeared for the Truth, and againſt the Romiſh Apoſtacy; which as a freſh River, made its way through that horrid Lake, without mixing therewith. *Qu.* Is there not ſome infallible Rule and Judg, for determining matters of Faith within the Church, and on whoſe deciſive ſentence we may ſecurely reſt in the greateſt controverſies? *Anſw.* If we own our ſelves Chriſtians, there can be no debate here, that the Scripture contained in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, is the ſupream Judge from whom no appeal

p peal is; *The Oracles of God* committed to the Church, *Rom.*3.2. to give anſwers in every dark caſe. *The Type and form of ſound Doctrine*, Rom. 6. 17. Yea, that to whoſe ſentence we are in all matters both of Faith, and Practice, expreſly referred by the Lord, *Iſa.* 8. 20. *To the Law, and to the Teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to this, it is, becauſe there is no light in them.*

## SECT. II.

*Qu.* SInce it is ſure, the *Rule* of our Faith muſt be plain, and intelligible; Can the Scripture be ſuch, which according to the Popiſh Doctrine, is but a Maſs of dead, unſenſed Characters, until their Church put a ſence thereon? *Anſw.* If men will credit its own witneſs; we ſee, what was written there, *was for our learning*, *Rom.* 15. 4. and given for this end, that it might be underſtood; and how it is *ſuch as make the ſimple wiſe*, Pſal. 19. 7. We ſee *John* wrote not to *Fathers* only, *but to Young Men and Children*; 1 *Joh.* 2. 12, 13. and does not the promiſe of the *Spirit to lead us into all truth*, Joh. 16. 3. belong to every Believer, as well as to the greateſt Doctors of the Church; who pretend to no extraordinary Revelation for leading them? But the World may ſee it is not the obſcurity of the Scripture, againſt which their true quarrel lyes, but it's too clear evidence, before which their intereſt cannot ſtand. *Q.* But are not ſome things undeniably dark there, and hard to be underſtood? *A.* None does deny, but ſome Scripture-truths lye

not ſo obvious to our diſcerning as others, and that ſeveral Propheſies were ſealed up until the times of their taking place in the event; but if men will not ſtumble at noon-day, nothing can be more plain, than the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity, and theſe Truths which are neceſſary to Salvation: And is it not found what is dark in one Scripture, made clear in another? Therefore are we called to *ſearch the Scriptures*, *John* 5.38. as importing ſome diligent, and ſerious ſcrutiny about the ſame. *Qu.* Is it not expreſly ſhewed, 2 *Pet.*3.16. how there are things *hard to be underſtood in* Paul's *Epiſtles*, *which they who are unlearned and unſtable*, *wreſt to their own deſtruction?* *Anſw.* Here is not the leaſt Ground for a forbearing to make uſe of the Scripture, but a moſt ſad account given by the Apoſtle of ſome, whoſe *ignorance*, *unſtability*, and *perverſneſs of will*, *by wreſting the word* did meet here, as the great influencing cauſe more than the darkneſs of the Object, which thus could not but be to their own *deſtruction*; by whom none can judg was meant the whole Body of Believers, except the Doctors of the Church. *Qu.* But what Warrant is here for all to read the Scripture, when the *Romiſh* Church ſo expreſly forbids this, as the greateſt cauſe of Error and Hereſies? *Anſw.* It is a ſtrange cure, to keep from the Light, for fear of going wrong; and when Jeſus Chriſt ſaith, *you erre not knowing the Scripture*, *Mat.*22.29. that ignorance thereof muſt be the way to keep us right. But it is clear the Command is expreſs for

for all to *read this, and teach it to their Children*, *Deut.* 6. 11. And *David* makes it a mark of the bleſſed Man, *Pſ.* 1. 2. And that we ſhould *ſearch the Scriptures*, Joh. 5. 39. Yea, was it not on this account the *Beræans* were ſo highly commended, for *examining the Apoſtles Doctrine* by the Written Word, *Act.* 17. 11. *Qu.* What Inducements ſhould the *Romiſh* Church have, to a practice ſo viſibly croſs to the Rule? *Anſw.* I confeſs they have this Plea, That there is no Law for neceſſity; ſince there caſe ſo ſtands, they muſt either ruin their Church, and be diſcovered in the greateſt impoſture, that was ever known in the World, or have the Bible ſhut up, though it be to ruin the Souls of many Millions of the poor people; nor is it ſtrange ſuch *hate the Light, whoſe deeds are evil*, leſt they be reproved.

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## SECT. III.

*Queſt.* CAN the Scripture, be a deciding *Rule* to our Faith; which derives its *Authority* from the *Church*, according to the *Romiſh* Doctrine, without whoſe ſanction, and conſent, it muſt be no Scripture to us, nor Canonical? *Anſw.* I know it is one of the greateſt Principles they hold, to ſecure their intereſt, ſo as they may be alone Judges in their own cauſe; and for that end put down all credit, and Authority of this Divine Record; that it can give no ſentence againſt them, but be as a blank

Paper, to bear what Impreſs they put thereon; but it is moſt clear, the Apoſtolical Church had no ſuch claim, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. *Not that we have dominion over your faith, &c.* and how they brought their Doctrine to be tried by this light; yea, none will deny but that an *Angel coming from Heaven*, and an *immediate Voice* thence, is above all humane Authority; yet are we commanded to look beyond theſe to the Scripture, as our Rule, *Gal.* 1. 8. 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. And if the workings of the Holy Ghoſt on a Chriſtians ſoul be known and tried by the Word; can the *Romiſh* Church be the firſt Standard and Rule, at whoſe bar and deciſion this muſt needs ſtand or fall. Q. Thus every private man ſhould be his own judg, and not the Church to put what ſenſe he pleaſe on the Scripture. *Anſ.* Here is no ground to deny an authoritative Judgment to the Church of Chriſt, and a ſpecial reſpect thereto; though it is Miniſterial, not Soveraign and abſolute, according to the *Law*, and in purſuance thereof, not above it; for *there is but one Law-giver, who is able to ſave and deſtroy*, Jam. 4. 22. *And no power againſt the truth but for it*, 2 Cor. 13. 8. Nor do we in the leaſt deny that neceſſary and excellent uſe of a teaching Miniſtry, *Whoſe lips ſhould preſerve knowledg, and at whoſe mouth we are to ask for the Law.* But no *blind obedience* is impoſed thus, ſince the meaneſt Chriſtian hath a judgment of *diſcretion* to know and diſcern the truth, that his ſervice may be *reaſonable ſervice*, Rom. 12. 1. and his Faith a rational act; for *every man muſt prove his own work*, Galat. 6. 4. Q. But are not all commauded *to hear the Church*, Mat.

*Mat.*18.17. and implicitly rely on its ſentence. *Anſ.* Who could poſſibly infer thence, the Scriptures-authority to be not binding to us, until it hath this from the Church; we know the Command there hath a peculiar reſpect to Church-cenſures, but it is as clear the furtheſt obſervance of the Apoſtles, was to be ſuch as muſt not go without theſe bounds, *Be ye followers of us, as we are of Chriſt*: And it is ſure this Command alſo is given, *Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good*, 1 *Theſ.*5.21. But if thus the Bible muſt be ſhut up, and men hear only what the *Romiſh* Church ſays, under what a neceſſity are theſe to live & die infidels, who being ſhut up by a cloſe impriſonment, or in ſome remote parts of the earth, that ſecludes from all poſſible converſe with their Church, ſince the Scripture can be no ſuch to them, but muſt be kept cloſe; or if they adventure to look thereon, not believe their own eyes, for what they ſee and read.

## SECT. IV.

*Qu.* IS it not enough to anſwer all, the *Romiſh* Church is *Infallible*, & the Pope as Supream Head thereof, ſuch who cannot err in what he teacheth from his Chair; which is one of the moſt eſſential requiſites of the Rule of faith. *Anſ.* We know the true Catholick Church is ſecured by the Promiſe of God from a final apoſtacy, and *that the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt her*; but it is clear they muſt bring another Bible, than the Old and New Teſtament, to prove an Infallibility thence to any Church upon the Earth. Were not

the Apoſtles fallible (though not in their Doctrine being therein immediately inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt) when ſo ignorant in the Death, Sufferings, and Reſurrection of Chriſt? and it is ſure *Peter* was far from this when he denied his Maſter; nor after he was confirmed, and had that aſſurance given that *his faith ſhould not fail*, (which is on great foundation of the pretended Romiſh Infallibility) when *Paul withſtood him to the face*, *Gal.* 2. 11? and does not all know in after-times, what Decrees of Councils have been againſt Councils, and Popes againſt Popes.

*Qu.* Is it not clear how *Peter* was the Rock on which Chriſt promiſed to *build the Church*? *Mat.* 10. 18. *Anſw.* That Scripture does ſufficiently clear it ſelf, that by this Rock was expreſly meant the Doctrine and Confeſſion then made of Chriſts being the Son of God; and none can deny that power given there to *Peter*, was in as expreſs terms given to the reſt of the Apoſtles, *Mat.* 18. 18. *John* 20. 22. But will it ever be found how *Peters* claim to *Rome* is made out, or that he was there, and whence each ſucceeding Pope comes in to be his Succeſſor? and where it is ſaid, *Epheſ.* 2. 20. *Ye are built on the Foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles.* Is there then any Note of difference put betwixt *Peter* and the reſt? yet here is the great Foundation of their Church. *Qu.* Is not thus clear ground for ſuch an Infallibility, that the Church is called the *Pillar and Ground of truth*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. *Anſw.* We know this was ſaid of the Church which *Timothy* was over; tha t none can ſay was the Church of *Rome*, to which

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the ſame Apoſtle wrote alſo; or evince their peculiar claim beyond other Churches thereto; but if the leaſt ground were to infer an infallibility from this, it ſhould then reſpect the Church over which *Timothy* was, I mean the multitude of Believers there, and not the Leaders thereof; for the words are thus, That *thou mayſt know how to behave in the Houſe of God, which is the Pillar and ground of truth.* But 'tis moſt clear, here is held forth the ſtability and fixedneſs of the Church-Univerſal, whatever falling off be of perſons; yea, particular Churches that yet this ſtands as a Pillar, according to that *Jer.* 1. 18. *I have made thee a defenced Pillar, and they ſhall fight againſt thee and ſhall not prevail.* But all know ſtability in the Truth, and infallibilty are vaſtly different, and no poſſible reaſoning from the one to the other. *Qu.* But is not ſomething evident from the Scripture, to ſhew a difference betwixt *Peter* and the reſt of the Apoſtles, as to his precedence, and that the Monarchy of the Church was eſtabliſhed in his Perſon? *Anſw.* We find Jeſus Chriſt exactly prohibits ſuch a thing in the Church, yea, to the whole Apoſtles without exception denies any ſuch abſolute Authority, *Mat.* 23. 10. *Be ye not called Maſters; for one is your Maſter even Chriſt:* But if any ſhadow were for this, it might ſeem on more ground applicable to *Paul*; when he ſays, beſides theſe the *cure of all the Churches came on me.* 2 *Cor.* 11. 28. I confeſs, if this had been ſaid of *Peter*, the *Romiſh* Writers would have made a ſtrange noiſe, as if they had found one demonſtration for all to ſecure them.

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## SECT. V.

*Qu.* THough the Scripture-Authority be Divine, and not dependent on the Church, yet is there ſafe adventuring on this alone, which the *Romiſh* Doctrine expreſly holds to be defective, and inſufficient as a Rule of Faith without Tradition. *Anſw.* If men credit the Scripture and its Teſtimony to be true, it does expreſly reſolve this, how the alone way for being ſaved, is in following what is written there, *John* 20. 31. *Theſe things are written, that you may believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and that believing you might have life through his Name*; and this with ſuch plainneſs held forth as if it were Prophetically direct to anſwer the ſame, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16. *From a Child thou haſt known the holy Scripture, which is able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus. All Scripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works.* *Qu.* But doth not the Apoſtle command to *hold faſt the Traditions*, whether by *word or Epiſtle* delivered to us; 2 *Theſ.* 2. 15. *Anſw.* How ſtrange were it to reaſon, from the duty of holding faſt what was immediately taught from the Apoſtle by Word, being the very ſame which was delivered by Epiſtle, to our receiving the Traditions of the Church of *Rome*, which are not only things different from the Scripture, but moſt viſibly contrary thereto; when neither

neither Scripture, Reaſon, nor Antiquity, lets us ſee their being delivered by the Apoſtles. *Qu.* Is there not ſuch an *Infallibility* of *Oral Tradition* as cannot poſſibly deceive, whereby the Chriſtian Faith and true ſenſe of the Scripture have been delivered down from hand to hand, and on which with greateſt ſecurity we may reſolve our Faith? *Anſ.* To this of late does a part of the *Romiſh* Church flie, who know not how to ſtand, or where to retreat from the light, which preſſeth them ſo far; though it ſeems this hath been in ſuch haſte, as they adverted not to its viſible repugnancy to Scripture and Reaſon: for can it be judged there is a more ſure and plain delivery of Truth to us by mens ſpeaking, than by writing; or how a certainty of the ſenſe of their Traditional Doctrine ſhould be more than of the Scripture? though this we ſee that the vileſt Pamphlet that ever was writ could be no worſe dealt with than the *Romiſh* Church (I mean the Leaders thereof) do with theſe *Divine Oracles*, who expoſe it to the deriſion of the World, as a piece of unintelligible non-ſence; but unleſs all certainty of the Chriſtian Faith be paſſed from, this Principle muſt ſtand, that with moſt convincing evidence and plainneſs the Doctrine of Chriſt, and the way for being eternally ſaved, is delivered to us in the Scripture: againſt which the declared intent of *Oral-Tradition* is to reſolve our Faith not on the Teſtimony of God in his Word, but on what the Fathers and Fore-fathers have told to the Children. And can there be poſſible acceſs to deny how far Tradition in a few ages differs from it ſelf, which hath been the alone

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riſe of ſuch fabulous Romances the World hath been full of about matters of fact, from former times; yea how oft the Church hath been almoſt ſwallowed up of ignorance and error, ſo that if one would trace back that Doctrine that *Chriſt is truly God* by Tradition, they muſt loſe the ſcent when it came to *Athanaſius* times, who was the alone known Witneſs, againſt ſuch a horrid deluge of *Arrianiſm?* *Qu.* Is not ſo far a neceſſity of Tradition as the Scripture is not ſufficient to refute all Hereſies in the Church? *Anſw.* Can it be poſſible to underſtand Hereſies, but as they are againſt the Scripture? or how to have another conception thereof, and yet this not ſufficient for their refutation? this is I confeſs a Doctrine meet for ſuch who can make contradictions meet and agree at their pleaſure.

## SECT. VI.

*Queſt.* HAve we not ſafe and unanſwerable Ground from the *Antiquity* of the *Romiſh* Doctrine, and its long continued Succeſſion, to found ſome Infallible aſſurance of its Truth? *Anſw.* None can deny theſe, 1. That the Scripture is the trueſt *Antiquity*, and what is not according to this is a novelty brought in on the Church. 2. That the riſe and pedigree of the *Man of Sin* muſt be traced back to the times of the Apoſtles in his beginning to work, whoſe gradual breaking up did then haſten to a more full appearance. 3. This is moſt clear alſo, that the Primitive Church for ſome ages knew

knew no ſuch things as *Popery* in ſo horrid a corrupting of the Chriſtian Doctrine that after followed, nor what an *Univerſal Biſhop*, and his *Infallibility* meant. *Qu.* But can any evidence be found from theſe firſt times of the Chriſtian Church, that will import a contradicting the *Popiſh* Doctrines as it is now profeſſed? *Anſw.* There are no accidents, where the thing it ſelf hath no being; nor could theſe poſſibly write againſt Popery in ſuch Heads as the *Romiſh* Infallibility, the Worſhip of Images and Saints, *&c.* before they were once brought to light; but this by undeniable conſequence may be ſeen, that they held the Scripture to be the Rule and Foundation of the Chriſtian Faith; therefore not the *Romiſh* Church; yea, and that the Counſel of God was clearly revealed in the ſame; therefore not to be ſhut up as the Fountain of all error; yea, that there are but two places after death, without the leaſt touch or mentioning ſuch a thing as Purgatory; this alſo was the known Doctrine of the firſt times, that Faith in Chriſt was the only way of ſalvation; therefore not by our own *merit*.

## SECT. VII.

*Qu.* IS it not the Doctrine of the Scripture, as well as of the *Romiſh* Church, that we may be ſaved by an inherent Righteouſneſs, and the *merit* of good Works? *Anſw.* This is not denied but we muſt go to Heaven by merit, though not our own; yea, that upon the exacteſt terms of juſtice is due to him who hath payed

payed the price to the utmoſt value, that none of his purchaſe be loſt, but to us it is only of grace, as is moſt clear, *Rom.* 11.6. *If by grace it is no more of work, otherways grace is no more grace.* Ch. 4. 4,5. *Now to him that worketh is the reward, not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him who worketh not, but believeth in him who juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs.* And what can be more clear than that Deciſive ſentence thereupon? Chap. 3. 28. *Wherefore we conclude, that we are juſtified by faith without the deeds of the Law.* *Qu.* May not ſome though in an unconverted ſtate yet merit a conferring of grace upon them, by putting themſelves forth to the utmoſt for their own converſion, which the *Romiſh* Church call the *merit of congruity.* *Anſw.* If it be a Truth which *Iſaiah* ſpeaks, this muſt aſſuredly be falſe, *Ch.* 64.4. *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteouſneſs as filthy rags*; and that here is the alone Fountain-cauſe, that maketh *one to differ from another*, Rom. 9. 15. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*; then no plea can be from merit, by any improvement of mens natural abilities; nor can there be ſo much as an active concurrence for ſuch a chang, when it is ſo clear, before renewing grace comes, that all are the Children of Wrath, who of themſelves cannot frame their thoughts to that which is good. *Qu.* Yet is there not a *merit* from the *works of the regenerate*, which follow Juſtification, that is ſuch as may deſerve eternal life, not from the *imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs*, but their own *intrinſick* worth, and proportionateneſs to the reward, which is called

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the merit of Condignity? *Answ.* This doth most visibly subvert the whole Contrivance of the Gospel, which is a judicial transferring of our sin as a debt on Christ the Surety, and of his Righteousness and Merit to be imputed to us for our Justification, without any respect to works. and layeth down the very same way of life to us which was in the Covenant of Works, as is clear, 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. *Qu.* Do we not find Heaven held forth a sa reward, *Mat.* 5. 12? *Answ.* No reward of Debt can be found there; but to shew it is only of grace, and no proportion betwixt that which is given, and their working, we see those *who came in at the last hour*, had the same measure with them who had *wrought all the day*, *Mat.* 20. 8, 9. And can any merit be understood in that claim and reckoning the greatest labourer must still make, when he hath done all he can, that *he is but an unprofitable servant?* *Qu.* Is it not promised, *Rev.* 3. 4. that some shall walk with Christ *in white because they are worthy?* *Answ.* It is clear the Lord doth account these so, whom he hath accepted in his Son, and for whose sake alone it is, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. For *who makes thee to differ from another? and what hast thou which thou hast not received? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?* *Qu.* Yet is there not some undoubted necessity of Works here even in order to salvation? *Answ.* Nothing can be more clearly owned and asserted than this is by the Reformed Church, that though Works come not in as causes of our Justification; yet are they necessarily required in the Subject and Person justified, as the inseparable

rable fruits of justifying Faith, and by which the Truth thereof is declared to others, as is evidently shewed, *Jam.* 2.18.

## SECT. VIII.

*Qu.* IF all merits by men for themselves be void, what safe adventuring can be on the over-meriting of some for others; or on that great treasure thereof in the *Romish* Churches hand, from the works of supererogation, on which their Absolutions and Indulgences are founded? *Answ.* So horrid an imposture as this may let us see what it is to be given up of the Lord unto strong delusions; Could the *Wise Virgins* spare of their Oyl for others, *Mat.*25. 9. yea must not *every one prove his own work, and bear his own burthen*, *Gal.* 6. 6. But how should it possibly be known, that such an overplus of merit is, and is more than they need themselves, or is any Scripture-rule yet found for the same how to apply it, or in whose hand to put this trust. *Qu.* But what should that mean, *Col.* 1. 24. of the Apostles *filling up* what were behind of the *Sufferings of Christ in the flesh*, for his Bodies sake, which is the Church? *Answ.* Will any aver this was of Christs expiatory Sufferings, or that any thing lacked there by him *who is able to save to the utmost*, *Heb.* 7.25. But here is most clearly shewed, that as his Sufferings were the price of our Redemption, so were they for a Seal and Witness to the Truth, *John* 18. 37. upon which account hath the Saints in

in all following ages a ſhare, for filling up the Sufferings of Chriſt in his Body, which is the Church, as their Teſtimony to the Truth; which the great Witneſs himſelf did ſeal and confirm with his Blood, who before *Pontius Pilate* gave a good Confeſſion thereof. *Qu.* Does not that ſeem to warrant theſe plenary Indulgences and Abſolution of the Popiſh Church, with their Power to apply the merit of others for that uſe, which is ſo expreſs, *John* 20.23. *Whoſoever ſins ye remit, ſhall be remitted? Anſw.* It's a ſtrange Commentary which deſtroys the Text, and from Chriſts cloathing his Miniſters with a ſpecial authority for his ſervice, to infer thence, that it is their right to have his room alſo as Judg; they are indeed impowered by their Maſters Commiſſion to declare ſinners to be bound by their ſins, and looſed from them according to the Rule of the Word, in a right application thereof; and there the validity of that declarative ſentence is enſured, as they follow the Command and Rule given for that effect; but no ſhadow of ground can be here if men quit not their Reaſon: for what ſuch pretend, and to abſolve or releaſe ſouls out of Purgatory.

## SECT. IX.

*Qu.* IS there not clear Warrant for the Doctrine of *Purgatory*, when ſo great a ſtreſs of many of the *Romiſh* Principles viſibly lies, then that though there is an acquittance from eternal Death for ſuch as are truly penitent; yet

is there a place after this life, where for the expiation of Venial ſins, for which their prayers, and penances here could not ſatisfie Juſtice, they muſt be for a time tormented, and ſuffer the pains of Purgatory? *Anſw.* It is ſure no ſuch thing is revealed in the Scripture; but 'tis clear there, that Sin only can be expiated by the Blood of Chriſt, the end of whoſe ſufferings was to ſanctifie his Church, and preſent her without ſpot; and how the Saints go to no ſuch place after death, is moſt evidently ſhewed, *Eccleſ.* 12. 7. how *their ſpirit returns to God who made it*: *Iſa.* 57. 2. They *ſhall enter into peace.* and 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2. Where the Apoſtle makes it clear, there is no middle betwixt our being *uncloathed*, and *cloathed upon* with that houſe from Heaven; yea, 'tis ſure the converted Thief ſhould never have got by ſuch a place, if from the want of penances, and Church-indulgences this muſt needs be ſuffered; and that the infinite merit of Chriſt were not ſufficient for all: But this is a manifeſt charging God with injuſtice, as exacting double ſatisfaction for Sin, one from Chriſt, the other from the ſinner. *Qu.* But does not the Apoſtle ſhew there is *a being ſaved, yet ſo as by fire?* 1 *Cor.* 3. 15. *Anſw.* If you read that whole Scripture, none will deny this to be a figurative expreſſion; and how it is the ſame with that in *verſ.* 13. *The fire ſhall try every mans work*, which none can expound to be Purgatory; but that not without temporal loſs, ſo as to have their *work burned*, they ſhall eſcape. *Qu.* Are there not puniſhments here, with ſuch griefs and pains that follow ſin, as on the ſame

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ground may evince a Purgatory after this life? *Anſw.* What a ſtrange reaſoning is it from the temporal afflictions of the Saints and chaſtiſements of a Father, which are for healing, and no effect of vindictive juſtice; to contend for theſe pains after this Life, which are for ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God, and to expiate guilt, which he only could do who underwent that Curſe, that is due for the meaneſt Sin.

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## SECT. X.

*Qu.* IS there no Scripture-Inſtitution, for the *Romiſh Maſs*, which by that Church is expreſly held to be a real, external ſacrifice, propitiatory for the living, and the dead; wherein the Body of Chriſt is really offered up, yea, is ſuch as hath the ſame efficacy, both to expiate ſin, and purchaſe by doing thereof, ſpiritual and outward benefits which they give to the death of Chriſt. *Anſw.* It is clear there are no external ſacrifices under the New Teſtament, and theſe under the Law were only Typical of that bleſſed ſacrifice, which was accompliſhed in Jeſus Chriſt; *who offered himſelf but once*, *Heb.* 8. 27. And by *this one offering hath for ever perfected them who are ſanctified*: *Heb.* 10. 14. So as this denies the perfection of Chriſts offering, his everlaſting Prieſthood; nor can it be propitiatory, which is without Blood, ſince without that there is no *remiſſion*, *Heb.* 9. 22. *Qu.* Can it be denyed but ſome offerings are even under the *New Teſtament* unto God? *Anſw.* In the Lords

Supper we know there are Offerings of praiſe, and love; with a ſolemn commemoration of Chriſts Death; but no external Sacrifice is there, for that neceſſarily muſt be deſtroyed in the act of Offering, which none dare ſay of the bleſſed Body of Chriſt, nor can it be conceived, how a repetition of the Offering up of Chriſt ſhould really be, and not of his Sufferings alſo. *Qu.* Did not *Melchiſedeck* offer Bread and Wine, who was the Prieſt of the moſt High God? *Gen.* 14. 18. *Anſw.* His bringing it forth to *Abraham*, but not offering thereof is moſt clear from the Scripture; which gives not the leaſt ſhadow of ground for that idolatrous ſervice of the Maſs; though on this they lay its greateſt weight. *Qu.* Are there not Prieſts now in the times of the Goſpel, as there was under the Law? *Anſw.* There is one only, and eternal High Prieſt who is ſuch as can have no ſucceſſour; But what do they mean thereby? for it muſt be either to repeat over again Chriſts Sacrifice, which is impoſſible and blaſphemous; or to repreſent what was done by him, which then is a Sacrament, and no Sacrifice: Yea, even in this are they not manifeſtly divided, how to give an account wherein the action of Sacrificing conſiſts, whether in the words of Conſecration, *this is my body*, or in putting it on the Altar; but it is clear, *Heb.* 7. 26. That the Prieſt, and offerer under the *New Teſtament*, ſhould be *Holy*, *undefiled*, and *ſeparate from ſinners*, which I judg they dare not own. *Qu.* But how bad ſoever in it ſelf this be, may not ſome be preſent thereat with a ſafe Conſcience, when no evil thus is intended? *Anſw.* We ought not from

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theſe grounds. 1. The ſcandal, and offending our Brother; which is not to be judged from our intention, but from what is manifeſt too thers in our doing ſuch a thing. 2. The hardning Papiſts in their way, this being a ſpecial ſymbol of their profeſſion whereby they are diſcerned. 3. That here is an obvious diſſimulation before God, and with the adverſary, in that profeſſed communicating with them in an external part of Worſhip.

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## SECT. XI.

*Qu.* WHat *Sacraments* are under the *New Teſtament?* *Anſw.* Theſe two only are of Chriſts appointment; Baptiſm, and the Lords Supper, which have theſe eſſential requiſites to a Sacrament of the *New Teſtament.* 1. An external viſible element. 2. That it is of expreſs Divine Inſtitution. 3. That this be perpetual unto the Worlds end. 4. That *it* have a promiſe of Grace and Pardon annexed thereto by God, which is not only ſignified, but offered, and ſealed to all who rightly partake thereof. *Qu.* Are theſe other five *Sacraments* of the Romiſh Church, but a human invention; to wit; Confirmation, Penance, extream Unction, Orders, and Marriage?

*Anſw.* Since Divine worſhip muſt be underſtood according to the Rule given for it by the Law-giver; we can know no ſuch: and it is clear by their own Doctrine, that from ſome of theſe their whole Church is excluded; the

Laity from Orders, and the whole Clergy from Marriage. *Qu.* Is not *Confirmation* an ancient practice of the Church? *Answ.* That only they can pretend, as a custom of the Church, in the Primitive times, to bring Children Baptized, after they came to some years, before the Church, and put them in mind of their Baptism, and engagements they were under in it: which they now turn into a Sacrament, and therewith use Chrism; which is Oyl mixed with Balsom: That they consecrate, putting it on the forehead in the form of a Cross, with these Words; I sign and confirm thee with this Chrism of Salvation; giving them a blow on the face with other foolish rites; by which they say, the fulness of the Holy Ghost is given them: Which hath not the least founding on the Scripture. *Qu.* But is not *Penance* a part of Repentance, and a visible sign thereof? *Answ.* The publick profession of Repentance for open scandalous sins, is a duty, but it is clear, no such outward sign was ever instituted in the Word, as whipping, pilgrimage, *&c.* Yea, nothing more contrary thereto, than their declared meaning of this, which is a satisfaction to justice, and compensation of the wrong done unto God thereby: nor can they agree themselves about the Sacramentality thereof, some making the form thereof to be the act of the Priests absolution, others not. *Qu.* Is there not clear ground from *James* 5. 14. for *extream unction*; in which with the *Oyl* of *Olive* consecrate, they anoint divers parts of the bodies of those who are on death-bed, with these words, I anoint such a place, that wherein thou hast

haſt ſinned thereby thou may be forgiven? *Anſ.* For what the Apoſtle there mentions; the recovery of the ſick perſon is moſt evidently intended, but this extream Unction is not uſed until the recovery of the party be paſt hope: Yea, the health there promiſed was miraculous, anſwering to that time when the Faith of miracles was in the Church; ſo as this is evidently temporary for ſuch who had the extraordinary gift of healing: though the Elders of the Church praying over them when they had no ſuch gift, we deny not to be perpetual.

## SECT. XII.

*Qu.* IS there not a clear ground for Chriſts being bodily preſent in the Sacrament; ſo as the whole ſubſtance of the Bread and Wine there in the act of Conſecration, is turned into the ſubſtance of his Body, and Blood; which is the Romiſh Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, and one great Article of their Faith? *Anſw.* From the Scripture nothing can be more plain, than its remaining to be ſtill Bread, and Wine, after the Conſecration, in the Lords Supper: 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. *So oft as you eat of this bread, &c.* And *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of this bread.* 1 *Cor.* 10. 16. *The bread which we break is it not the Communion of the body of Chriſt?* Yea, *Acts* 2. 46. where the partaking of the Sacrament is called *the breaking of bread*, in all which it is moſt expreſly ſhewed to be ſtill Bread: Nor were it a Sacrament any more,

more, if the ſign ſhould be turned in the thing ſignified: yea, is it not clear that Jeſus Chriſt did viſibly, and locally leave this World, whom *the* Heavens muſt contain, until the time of the reſtitution of all things, *Acts* 3. 21. which ſhould be a notorious falſhood, if his bodily preſence were true in the Sacrament. *Qu.* Are not theſe the very words of inſtitution, when Jeſus Chriſt took the Bread, *This is my Body?* *Anſw.* They are; but nothing more uſual in the Scripture then ſuch figurative expreſſions, as this is, to ſhew the Sacramental Union betwixt the Bread, and Chriſts Body; as 1 *Cor.* 10. *The Rock was Chriſt.* *Joh.* 15. 14. *I am the vine*, which I am ſure none can take in the literal ſence; but I confeſs ſuch need not fear to loſe their cauſe, who from the Churches Authority, can make void Scripture, Senſe, and Reaſon at once.

*Qu.* Wherein ſhould this contradict Senſe, or Reaſon? *Anſw.* It is ſuch a Doctrine, as expreſly ſhews, we muſt not credit our own eyes; and that all who were witneſſes to the miracles wrought by Chriſt, could have no certainty by their ſight thereof, though thoſe be given to confirm the truth unto mens ſenſes; nor could a contradiction to Reaſon be found beyond this, that the accidents of Bread and Wine, ſuch as colour, taſte, *&c.* can remain without their proper ſubject; yea, that the ſame numerical body, ſhould be in ſo many places at once, which in effect is to deny the reality of Chriſts Body now in Glory; and that it is humane and finite. *Qu.* Is there any ſafe warrant to adminiſter the Sacrament in both kinds, unto the people, ſince the Cup is

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ſo expreſly denyed to theſe by the Romiſh Church? *Anſw.* If the Inſtitution thereof, *Matt.* 26. and 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. be our Rule, this is moſt directly contrary thereto, and a ſacrilegious robbing the people of the ſame; for there it is *drink ye all of it*; and this Cup is *the New Teſtament in his Blood, ſhed for the* remiſſion of the ſins of many; which none can deny but it muſt concern the people as well as the Prieſts, ſince the ſign does belong to all intereſted in the thing ſignified: And though in the firſt adminiſtration by Chriſt himſelf, the receivers then were Apoſtles; yet in this act being the diſpencer himſelf, he does manifeſtly enter the whole Chriſtian Church in poſſeſſion of ſuch a priviledg, in the manner he gave it, wherein not the leaſt ſhadow for this reſtriction can be found.

## SECT. XIII.

*Qu.* WHatever charged be againſt the Popiſh Church, can there be juſt ground to charge them with Idolatry, from their practice in *worſhipping Images*? *Anſw.* It is not their alone practice but their profeſſed Doctrine and Principle; That the Images of the Trinity are not for a ſhew ſet up, but for religious adoration, than which no violation of the moral Law can be more direct. *Deut.* 15. 8. *You ſhall not make to your ſelf any graven Image, or the ſimilitude of any thing to bow down to it*; And *Deut.* 4. 12. *Ye did ſee no ſimilitude, ſaith the Lord, in the day I ſpoke to you.* And if the turning of the glory of the Inviſible

visible God into the likeness of a sinful Creature, *Rom.* 1. 23. be Idolatry, none can deny this to be such. *Qu.* Is not here sufficient ground to clear them from such a charge, that they do not fix or terminate their worship on the Image, but on what is thus represented? *Answ.* It is no subtle distinctions will acquit before the Lord, and at the bar of his Word justifie what he hath expressly condemned, when it is most clear this is not only worshipping with our mind the Image, but all corporal adoration thereof, that is forbid as idolatrous worship, *Thou shalt not bow down thereto*; yea, none can deny but *Aarons* Calf, and these of *Jeroboams* were intended for the true God, yet were most gross Idolatry; and therefore we find the Brazen Serpent taken down and destroyed, when once the people begun in an idolatrous way of to look after it. *Qu.* Is there not much difference betwixt an Idol and an Image, since by an Idol is to be understood the resemblance of some false and feigned thing, but the other is of what is true? *Answ.* Though the one is usually taken in a worse sense, yet have they both one meaning as to the import of the Word; but if the Image of a true and real thing should acquit from Idolatry, the worshipping of the Sun and Moon might have then a favourable claim; But as it is clear all visible representation of the true God is forbid; so is it also impossible to express a spiritual and infinite being, by any corporal similitude? *To whom will you liken me? Isa.* 46. 5. *Qu.* Is there no warrantable use of Images? *Answ.* The use of Images is not simply condemned; for we find some

ſome in the Temple by expreſs command, though they were only typical, to ſhadow out things to be fulfilled under the New Teſtament: there is alſo politick uſe of Images a lawful for ornament, and to keep up the remembrance of Friends; ſome Hiſtorical and for Doctrinal uſe; but none ſhould be ſet up in Churches, or thus any way ſet apart for religious Worſhip. *Qu.* Yea, is there not ſafe ground for the worſhip of the Virgin *Mary* and of the Saints, ſince this is not directed to them as unto God, but in a lower degree? *Anſw.* It is too viſible to be denied, with what horrid blaſphemy the *Romiſh* Church gives unto the Virgin *Mary* which is alone due to the glorious God, and to pray unto her is moſt directly contrary to the command, *Deut.* 6. 13. *Mat.* 4. 10. *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* Yea, there *is but one Mediator Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. By whom our worſhip and prayers can be accepted.

## SECT. XIV.

*Qu.* HAve we no Scripture-Warrant, why the Worſhip of God in the publick prayers of the Church ſhould be in an unknown Tongue, according to the Popiſh Doctrine? *Anſw.* You may have the Apoſtles anſwer thereto, 1 *Cor.* 14. 2. *He that ſpeaketh in an unknown tongue, ſpeaketh not unto men but unto God; for who underſtand him?* In which he ſhews there can be no viſible Communion there, in ſuch an act

act of worſhip, by thoſe to whom it is an unknown language; and lets us ſee what a contradiction to this one great end of publick Worſhip this is. Ver. 16. *How ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned ſay* Amen, *at thy giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtands not what thou ſayeſt*; That is, ſuch can have no real and heart-conſenting therewith, which is indiſpenſibly called for in this duty of publick prayer. *Qu.* Is it not enough to entruſt the Church-Guides with this, to whom the people make their Confeſſions? *Anſw.* Such an implicite reliance, we know was never taught by the Scripture; but there is no cure where men will entruſt their Religion and Reaſon at once to the diſpoſal of others. *Qu.* Is there not clear ground for that Article of the *Romiſh* Doctrine; That under pain of damnation, there ſhould be a Confeſſion of the moſt ſecret ſins of mens hearts unto the Prieſt; yea, his very thoughts which are of any weight, ſo far as he can remember, according to that *James* 5. 16. *Confeſs your faults one to another.* *Anſw.* It is clear, that as much ground is there to confeſs to the people, as to the Prieſts; nor is any ſuch thing warranted by a Scripture-command; but this aſſurance does it give, *That he who confeſſeth, and forſaketh his ſin ſhall find mercy*, *Prov.* 28. 13. Which none will deny is there meant unto God: Nor did the Saints in Scripture know auricular Confeſſion; *I ſaid, I will confeſs my tranſgreſſions unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin*, *Pſal.* 32. 5. But we deny not the duty of publick Confeſſion, in the caſe of publick and ſcandalous ſins.

SECT.

## SECT. XV.

*Qu.* THough the *Romiſh* Church in her Doctrine be found viſibly repugnant to the Scripture; yet how is that plea anſwered ſhe makes for being the only true Church, from *Antiquity*, *Unity*, *Univerſality*, and *an Uninterrupted Succeſſion*? *Anſw.* For the firſt is an anſwer already given, *Sect.* 7. and for her *Unity*, beſides that known diſtance they are at amongſt themſelves in many Doctrinals, are they not viſibly divided about the very Foundation of their Faith, and Infallibility of their Church? whether this reſolve on the Pope alone, or the Pope with a Council, or that late found-out Rule of Oral-Tradition: as to that claim of *Univerſality*, it muſt ſhew a ſtrange confidence, when it is ſo known, that much more than the one half where Chriſtianity is embraced through the world, does not at all own the *See of Rome*: and for that *Succeſſion* of their Church, and uninterrupted Line of Popes, they will not themſelves offer to debate, how there hath been three Popes at one time; yea, by what horrid means moſt of them got up to that Throne, their greateſt Writers are forced to confeſs. *Qu.* Is the Apoſtacy of that Church ſuch, that there is no ſafe Communion with her, and being ſaved in that Religion? *Anſw.* If *Rome* be that ſpiritual *Babylon*, *Rev.* 18. 4. as is there moſt evident, it is ſure the command is peremptory; *To come out of her, leſt being partakers of her ſins, they be partakers of her plagues alſo.* And is it not ſuch

act of worſhip, by thoſe to whom it is an unknown language; and lets us ſee what a contradiction to this one great end of publick Worſhip this is. Ver. 16. *How ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned ſay* Amen, *at thy giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtands not what thou ſayeſt*; That is, ſuch can have no real and heart-conſenting therewith, which is indiſpenſibly called for in this duty of publick prayer. *Qu.* Is it not enough to entruſt the Church-Guides with this, to whom the people make their Confeſſions? *Anſw.* Such an implicite reliance, we know was never taught by the Scripture; but there is no cure where men will entruſt their Religion and Reaſon at once to the diſpoſal of others. *Qu.* Is there not clear ground for that Article of the *Romiſh* Doctrine; That under pain of damnation, there ſhould be a Confeſſion of the moſt ſecret ſins of mens hearts unto the Prieſt; yea, his very thoughts which are of any weight, ſo far as he can remember, according to that *James* 5. 16. *Confeſs your faults one to another.* *Anſw.* It is clear, that as much ground is there to confeſs to the people, as to the Prieſts; nor is any ſuch thing warranted by a Scripture-command; but this aſſurance does it give, *That he who confeſſeth, and forſaketh his ſin ſhall find mercy*, *Prov.* 28. 13. Which none will deny is there meant unto God: Nor did the Saints in Scripture know auricular Confeſſion; *I ſaid, I will confeſs my tranſgreſſions unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſin*, *Pſal.* 32. 5. But we deny not the duty of publick Confeſſion, in the caſe of publick and ſcandalous ſins.

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ſuch a threatning, we may read, *Rev.* 14. 9. as ſhould cauſe men to tremble who are not under ſome ſtrange light of Induration; yea, now ſince the breaking up of ſo great a light, are the Waters become bloody, *Rev.* *Qu.* What can be ſeen of outward Inducements that they have in the matter of their Religion? *Anſw.* It is a ſtrange cover muſt be over mens eyes, if they ſee not how its whole frame is a politick Intereſt; the Scripture ſhut up to keep the people in the dark, and an *Infallibility* to ſecure all for keeping them under blind obedience, the Doctrine of Merit and Purgatory, a moſt viſible lucrative Engine; ſo as in that Religion it is moſt demonſtrable, No rich man periſhes, if his heart will ſerve him to part with Silver for his Soul; for though he have no merit of his own, there is enough in the Churches Treaſure of the merit of others to be purchaſed. It is indeed a ſad Religion for the poor, whoſe ſore Penances here, and Purgatory after, muſt make up what they want to lay out for a full Abſolution: yea, may not all ſee its contrivance ſuch, as the moſt licentious and groſs can fully ſuit therewith, when thus they may ſin at the higheſt rate and not fear their ſoul, ſince there is a retreat for all to the Popes plenary power for pardon; and how by Auricular Confeſſion they can know the moſt hid and cloſe conveyances of men, and be on all their counſels, when thus kept under the awe of their threatnings.

*FINIS.*